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ABSTRACT

These four issues of the CSSEDC Quarterly (Conference for Secondary School English Department Chairpersons) represent the quarterly for 1989. Articles in number 1 deal with professional development, and include: "Sharing Expertise within a Department" (Martha R. Dolly); "Empowerment Develops a Computer Writing Center" (Norman L. Frey); "Videotapes for Inservice: An Expanding Resource for Teachers" (Allan Dittmer); "Observing Our Counterparts: A Professional Development Day" (Joy Marks Gray); and "Professional Study Groups: Collegiality for the Improvement of Instruction" (Ken Mitchell). Articles in number 2 discuss articulation programs and include: "The Co-Teaching Project" (Donald A. McAndrew); "High School/College Collaboration: All You Have To Do Is Ask" (Edgar H. Thompson); "Promoting Cooperation between High School and College Writing Programs" (Eileen Oliver); and "No Respect: The CSSEDC St. Louis Preliminary Survey" (Kevin C. McHugh). The writing connection is the focus of number 3: "Writing-Across-The-Curriculum Challenges Professional Development" (Rita Pollard); "Linking Professional Development to Curricular Change" (John Kent and Thomas Trevisani, Jr.); "The College Preparatory Student: Performance and Proficiency" (Edward J. Borowiec); and "Writing Together" (Mary Jane Reed). Articles in number 4 deal with research in the classroom (teacher-research) and include: "Research in the English Classroom: Taking a First Step" (Collin T. Wansor); "Developing Interest in Classroom Research" (Gloria A. Neubert); "A Researcher Observes a Writing and Reading Community" (Carole Ackerson Bertisch); and "Projects Support Teacher Research" (Melanie Sperling). (SR)

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CSSEDC Quarterly

Conference for Secondary School English Department Chairpersons

Volume 11, Number 1
February 1989
Editor: James Strickland

In This Issue

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

by James Strickland, editor

Once a year, maybe twice, teachers send their students home, so the teachers can have the school to themselves. We call these days "Professional Development," but they are really opportunities to admit that we never stop learning. I thought an interesting issue might focus on how we become professionally developed—what do we do on these days? I found that, in general, we invite speakers of renown to come to visit us, we share techniques and theories among ourselves, and we go outside, on field trips, to see what others do. Each of the authors presented here offers a unique variation on one of these types of development days.

The first article is written by Martha R. Dolly, an Assistant Professor of English at Frostburg State University in Maryland. The idea for "Sharing Expertise within a Department" began when a colleague of Martha's, Molly Walter-Burnham, shared an innovative approach with another colleague, Audrey Edwards, soon to become acting chairperson of the department. Their department developed a high-tech approach to the traditional exchanging of ideas—videotaping. The expertise began to be shared as a featured moment at department meetings.

The second article is written by Norman L. Frey, Chairperson of the Department of English at New Trier High School, Winnetka, Illinois. In "Empowerment Develops a Computer Writing Center," he shares his belief that New Trier's writing center has shown its unintended but real benefit in the area of staff development: it is a vehicle for classroom teachers—Sally Jackson and Cathy Sarkisian—to assume leadership and management roles.

The third article is written by Allan Dittmer, Chairperson of the Department of Secondary Education at the University of Louisville, Kentucky. He is also chair of the NCTE Committee to Review Videotape and Film for Inservice Materials. Although his committee has recommended only a very few videotapes for codistribution by NCTE, Dr. Dittmer feels that he has reviewed a good many videotapes of interest and offers, in "Videotapes for Inservice: An Expanding Resource For Teachers," his own annotated list of videotapes for inservice use.

The fourth article is written by Joy Marks Gray, Chairperson of the Department of English at Gilmour Academy in Gates Mills, Ohio. In "Observing Our Counterparts: A Professional Development Day," Joy Gray's department went outside their own school to discover how much they had in common with English teachers in other schools.

The last article is written by Ken Mitchell, an English teacher at Nyack High School in Nyack, New York. As an intern Curriculum Specialist, Ken Mitchell has become interested in in-service programs for teachers. His school developed professional study groups to encourage teachers to exchange their ideas on issues, described in "Professional Study Groups: Collegiality for the Improvement of Instruction."

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At the latest CSSEDC conference in St. Louis, someone concluded a conversation with me by saying that she had xeroxed several articles in the last issue and distributed them for discussion at a department meeting. She hoped I wouldn't mind. I was thrilled. My hope in assuming the editorship of the *Quarterly* has been that department chairpersons will use the *Quarterly* as a focus of discussion for department meetings, to encourage the teachers in their department to try the ideas presented, and to suggest that their faculty be the ones who write the articles for next year's *Quarterly*.

SHARING EXPERTISE WITHIN A DEPARTMENT

by Martha R. Dolly
Frostburg State University

One fall afternoon, a member of our English faculty casually mentioned to a colleague that she had found it necessary to take her baby granddaughter to her morning composition class. The child had been set in the middle of the room and the students had been asked to describe the baby in terms of particle, wave, and field. Although she had frequently heard her colleague mention this tagmemic approach to invention, she nevertheless marveled at her ingenuity, and she suggested that at the next department meeting a forum be developed for sharing "inspired lessons" or individual approaches to composition instruction.

The department agreed that all could benefit from becoming acquainted with each other's strategies, that all could supplement their professional development by drawing on the creativity and expertise in our own building.

Videotaping

We considered several possibilities for the sharing and quickly decided, given the media center available to us, to undertake a videotaping project. Six of our twenty members volunteered to participate, and in the spring each made a 15- to 30-minute videotape demonstrating his or her most novel or successful approach to teaching composition. With the help of the media center, we edited the individual tapes (and later prepared a single tape explaining and illustrating the entire project). During the following spring, the acting department chair arranged to show a clip from a tape at the end of each department meeting. Each viewing was followed by a spirited discussion, ending with at least one instructor's vowing to experiment with a colleague's technique.

Mentoring

As we expected, this "mentoring" project allowed us to share our strategies and approaches in a nonthreatening manner. Without such a forum, two teachers may briefly trade ideas in the hall between classes, but neither can demonstrate, or even adequately explain, a teaching strategy. Worse yet, one of them might suspect that the other is suggesting adoption of a particular technique or might hesitate to pose certain questions for fear of appearing uninformed. Some of us, for example, were generally familiar with tagmemic theory, but none had ventured to experiment with it in the classroom. One teacher's demonstration showed us how to expect students to react and convinced us that tagmemics, as she uses it, can foster not only invention but also collaboration. Likewise, several of my colleagues have become curious about my work encouraging students to revise more independently through self-assesment. By viewing my videotape, they can apply what I have learned, modifying my approach to suit their own classes, without having to spend several semesters determining what works well and what does not.

Like the others who participated in this project, I quickly saw that this sharing of insights and expertise could benefit me as well as my colleagues. The process of explaining a strategy to fellow professionals, especially those with whom we work every day, requires us to ground our approach in theory, to refine our activities and our explanations of them, and to question what we do. As a result of this project, we experimented more than we otherwise would have, initiating more classroom research and seeking our colleagues' reactions and suggestions. In the course of preparing my videotape on encouraging students to assess their own writing more actively, I gradually narrowed the number of self-assessment techniques I was using by questioning students to determine which procedures were most successful. I am now more confident about my approach to self-assessment, yet I realize that I will need to continue refining the two activities I have found most fruitful.

Collaborating

Besides giving the department as a whole an opportunity to discuss a novel strategy and encouraging each participant to improve his or her teaching and research, this project prompted us to work together more than we were accustomed to, and especially to collaborate on proposal writing. For example, when one participant suggested preparing a presentation for a conference on collaboration in writing centers, several of us looked again at our material, seeing it from a new perspective and finding more common assumptions behind our approaches than we had originally recognized.

Departmental projects can take a variety of forms, and probably any project that generates discussion among colleagues will foster professional development. A long-term cooperative effort such as ours provides some built-in accountability, as well as an in-house forum for sharing insights and presenting findings as they emerge. A videotaping project provides several additional benefits, even if the filming is done by novices and the tapes are left unedited. Videotaping encourages participants to refine and polish their material more than a submission of written materials or a causal presentation probably would. In addition, the tapes can be stored in a department library for future use by individual department members. We have even found that some of our videos (especially the ones demonstrating conferencing) are appropriate for showing in composition classes. In addition, the taping process itself provides a common bond (or shared fear) for participants, forcing them to plan together even if their philosophies, approaches, and materials differ significantly. And the final product, the set of tapes, indicates to ourselves and to others that the department values collaboration more than competition. Certainly a cooperative undertaking such as ours can boost morale and foster change more effectively than the traditional exchanging of ideas beside the water fountain.

Next semester, my colleague will not be the only one introducing students to collaborative invention through tagmemics. And, considering our initial success, I expect the department to undertake future projects, ones involving more volunteers and focusing on literature as well as on composition.

EMPOWERMENT DEVELOPS A COMPUTER WRITING CENTER

by Norman L. Frey
New Trier High School, Winnetka, Illinois

The clarion call of the current phase of educational reform is "teacher empowerment," teachers taking greater professional control of and responsibility for the educational enterprise. I am convinced that the success of my English department's first-year

operation of a computer-equipped writing center results from the empowerment of two members of the department.

With the blessing of our superintendent, these two teachers conceived the project; they plotted its potential, its shape, and its structure, insisting that it match their vision; and every day (sometimes at night, too), they operated all phases of this writing lab/writing center at New Trier High School, Winnetka, Illinois. (One of the most critical decisions was the baptism—the parents eventually settling on "MacWrite Site," in homage to the MacIntosh SE equipment).

A year has passed since our MacWrite Site opened its doors as a writing center/writing lab for the 3,000 students in our school. Costing over $80,000 for an initial set of twenty-four networked MacIntosh SE computers and eight Imagewriter II printers, plus room remodeling, furniture design and carpentry, air-conditioning, and so forth (one of the biggest expenses being the "so forth"), the question is: Was it worth it? Can't the teaching of writing—the assignment of and correction of papers—be accomplished as effectively and decidely less expensively with pen, paper, and composition text?

One does not have to be a perceptive reader to predict that the answer to this question is going to be "No! no! A thousand times no!" since there would then be little reason for the appearance of this article, except, possibly, as public penance for the sins of extravagance.

Instead of reciting a familiar litany of benefits accruing from the use of the microcomputer, namely to hook students' engagement in that dreaded chore of writing by enabling easy access and control over rhetorical manipulation and experimentation, I believe it is in the area of staff development that the writing center has shown unintended but real benefit: the MacWrite Site is a vehicle for classroom teachers to assume leadership and management roles in conceiving and directing and operating a major component of the instructional program.

From the department chairperson's perspective, charged with providing instructional leadership and nurturing staff development, I have seen the MacWrite Site, principally through the efforts of these two teacher-directors, become a practical impetus for engaging a large majority of the 45 members of the department in teaching writing as an experimental, recursive process, rather than as an exercise in merely assigning, demonstrating, and correcting writing.

Indeed, these two teachers fully understand the meaning of "empowerment" because, in addition to continuing to teach (a reduced load, but teaching classes, nonetheless), their role in the writing center has been all-encompassing, from inception of idea, to determining philosophy and goals; from selecting hardware, software, and furniture, to designing the physical facility itself; from interviewing, hiring, and supervising a clerk-aide, to establishing a written job description for themselves and conducting weekly self-assessments; from engaging in short-term and long-range planning, to operating the venture day-to-day, adjusting and refining as needs arose.

The day-to-day operation includes scheduling classes and special groups; providing group instruction and tutoring; coaching both students and teachers; developing software for teaching phases of writing as needed by staff; recruiting and supervising additional faculty to serve as tutors in the lab; maintaining equipment and trouble-shooting; and even managing the budget and experiencing difficult decisions and living with the results.

Their most significant job is to pique the interest of colleagues in the department—from the mildly interested to the reluctant—to try the lab, to discover how the computer is much more than a glorified typewriter, to become aware of some of the recent research in teaching writing, and to use the most important findings to enhance student learning and achievement, both in the lab and in their classrooms. Without question, the latter has been one of their strongest accomplishments, since a total of 32 teachers have made use of the lab, to one degree or another, in the first year. I might offer some additional statistics: 20,200 student sign-ins were recorded for the year, comprising students in class and drop-ins. Average daily attendance in the lab was 123 students. When open one night a week during the research paper season, the lab drew 90 students to use the computers and to confer with staff. Over 800 students used the lab during summer session. In fact, during the first year, three additional computers and more printers were added to the network, with three more installed for the second year, as well as construction of additional work stations and improvements in room configuration. Further, as a result of the enormous amount of traffic in the lab, heavy-duty static-free carpeting has replaced the standard waxed floor (which went through four multiple-layer waxings last year).

More important, through their high visibility, resulting from frequent newsletters and memos to the department as well as testimonials from teachers who are using the lab, the department-at-large has become much more cognizant of new approaches to teaching writing and, at the very least, recent developments in the field. That, wedded to the use of the computer as a facilitator in the teaching and learning process, has resulted in considerable gains in staff growth.

Their devotion to the enterprise and their zeal are boundless. While these MacWrite teacher-directors report directly to the English department chairperson, working cooperatively and constructively, they know that the primary responsibility for the MacWrite Site is theirs. In other words, the concept of teacher "ownership" is the factor that has made the MacWrite Site one of the busiest spots in the school.

The director of the MacWrite Site, a twenty-year veteran of the faculty, and her associate director, in her third year on the faculty, complement each other in areas of expertise, in orientation to vision and details, as well as in leadership style and "image" in the department. They have proven to be the perfect team to span the range of interests and proclivities in the department, and so, have succeeded in making the MacWrite Site integral to the English program. In successive years, I see opportunities for other teachers to assume leadership roles in the writing center.

Too often there is a view that teaching is a "dead-end" job: day-in, day-out, year-in, year-out sameness. And too often, when the opportunities arise, excellent classroom teachers move into administrative positions, far removed from the classroom, to develop a new phase of their talents. Our conception of the MacWrite Site has capitalized on the best that teachers have to offer as classroom instructors, while providing the opportunity for these working teachers to design and administer an exciting and productive and expanding educational unit. And that, to answer the earlier question, is why, in addition to the usual expected reasons, our MacWrite Site is "worth it."

VIDEOTAPES FOR INSERVICE: AN EXPANDING RESOURCE FOR TEACHERS

by Allan Dittmer
University of Louisville

If Neil Postman is right that "we are now a culture whose information, ideas and epistemology are given form by television, not by the printed word" (*Amusing Ourselves to Death*. New York: Viking, 1985), then to be accurate, it is videotape that informs and shapes our ideas.

Videotape recorders and cassettes are so relatively inexpensive, readily accessible and easy to operate that it is now possible for virtually anyone to produce educational television programs. Unfortunately, the quality of these programs varies considerably from the well produced, ready-for-commercial-television program, to the poorly produced, "home movie." Yet, viewers have come to expect a level of quality set by commercial television's uniformly high standard of production, even though many of the videotapes made for educational use are produced by local production companies and even amateurs. Thus, as more and more videotape programs became available for educational use, an NCTE committee was established to review videotape material developed by other agencies and individuals, and to recommend Council distribution of such material for inservice use.

The NCTE Committee to Review Videotape and Film for Inservice Materials has received somewhere in the vicinity of 250 videotapes for review since it was established in 1983. Not surprisingly, few if any films have been received by the committee.

During the years the committee has existed, it has reviewed a good many videotapes of interest to members of the Council, although it has recommended only a very few videotapes for codistribution by NCTE. As a member of the profession who feels these materials are of interest to my colleagues, not as one speaking officially on behalf of the NCTE committee I chair, I am offering the following annotated list of videotapes as a selected sample of materials the committee reviewed but did not necessarily recommend for codistribution by NCTE.

All the tapes are available in VHS format. Other information follows the annotation in this form: length of the videotape in minutes, other availability: 3Q, if available in three-quarter-inch tape format, and B, if available in Beta format. Pertinent ordering information is also provided so that the reader can obtain pricing information and copies of the tapes from the distributor and often directly from the producer.

1. *Don Murray in Action.*

   Five teachers from the Wyoming Writing Project meet to follow up on a series of workshops with Don Murray. They discuss assignments, how to conference on writing in progress, how to organize a classroom for conference teaching, and how to publish in classrooms (30 min., 3Q, 2 tape set).

   Available through: John Warnock, Department of English, University of Wyoming, Laramie, WY 82071.

2. *Sparking Connections Between Speech and Writing.*

   Groups of basic writers—both native English speakers and ESL students—participate in three types of structured oral activities (61 min., 3Q-B).

   Available through: Department of Language Education, 135 Aderhold Hall, The University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602.

3. *Three Strategies for Using Writing to Learn.*

   Mary K. Healy leads a group of teachers from various disciplines through a series of writing experiences as an across-the-curriculum learning tool (45 min.).

   Available through: Kelly Collins, Production Manager, Boynton/Cook Publishers, P.O. Box 860, Upper Montclair, NJ 07043.

4. *Searching Writing: Making Knowledge Personal.*

   Ken Macrorie leads secondary and college teachers from a number of disciplines in a workshop that shows how "searching writing"—the I-Search process—is a way of thinking and learning (40 min.).

   Available through: Kelly Collins, Production Manager, Boynton/Cook Publishers, P.O. Box 860, Upper Montclair, NJ 07043.

5. *Developing Contexts for Revision.*

   Mary K. Healy takes secondary and college teachers through a writing activity that permits them to experience strategies and approaches that their own students can use to become better revisers (45 min.).

   Available through: Kelly Collins, Production Manager, Boynton/Cook Publishers, P.O. Box 860, Upper Montclair, NJ 07043.

6. *Writing to Win.*

   Five demonstrations of prewriting, first drafts, and responses to first drafts in five modes: character sketch, explaining a process, comparison/contrast, problem-solution/cause-effect, and thesis-proof (25 min., 3Q-B, 6 tape set).

   Available through: Erincort Consulting, Inc., 3065 Barnett Shoals Road, Athens, GA 30605.

7. *Scripting.*

   Teachers are instructed how to teach students to script a cooperative writing technique (15 min.).

   Available through: Barbara Smigala, 6425 W. 33rd Street, St. Louis Park, MN 55426.

8. *What About Reading?*

   A series of five videotapes written and produced by Dr. Judith Newman for the Department of Education, Province of Nova Scotia, developed as part of an inservice program for teachers in reading across the curriculum (20 min.).

   Send inquiries to: Mr. Bernard Hart, Media Services, 6955 Bayers Road, Halifax, N.S. B3L 4S4, or to Dr. Judith Newman, 15 Braeside Lane, Halifax, N.S., B3M 3J6.

9. *Teaching Reading as Thinking.*

   Current theory and research on teaching reading comprehension translated into a practical instructional model for the classroom. Researchers and developers explain the reading process, and teachers demonstrate recommended strategies in actual classroom scenes (30 min., Q-B).

   Send inquiry to: ASCD Order Processing Department, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 125 N. West Street, Alexandria, VA 22314–2798. Phone: 703/549–9110.

10. *Teaching Skillful Thinking.*

    A four-part series designed to help teachers plan ways to emphasize thinking throughout the curriculum (30 min., 3Q-B).

    Send inquiries to: ASCD Order Processing Department, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 125 N. West Street, Alexandria, VA 22314–2798. Phone: 703/549–9110.

11. *Write to Think: An Interdepartmental Commitment.*

    A 60-minute preschool inservice presented to the high school staff of Homestead High School, Mequon, Wisconsin. The focus of the write to think workshop evolved from writing across the curriculum (60 min.).

    Send inquiries to: Mrs. Lorraine Buehler, Homestead High School, 5000 W. Mequon Road, 112 N. Mequon, WI 53092.

12. University Writing Program Tape Set.

    I. *The Student Takes a Voice.* Using student writing, Walker Gibson discusses different student voices and explains the principle of appropriateness by making an analogy to student dress (29 min.); II. *Group Dynamics in English*

112. A review of the pros and cons of teaching in a word-processor lab (10 min.); III. *Basic Writing Interventions*. Examples of both good handling and pitfalls are shown in intervening with a student's work at the second draft stage. (15 min.); IV. *English 112 Conferencing*. Three teaching assistants comment on excerpts from student conferences, which are included in the tape (27 min.); V. *College Writing Conferencing*. The format is similar to the previous tape, but there is a fourth person involved in the group commentary (20 min.); VI. *Peer Editing with Written and Spoken Feedback*. A classroom demonstration of peer-reviewing procedure (6 min., 30 sec.).

Send inquiries to: Sara L. Stelzner, University Writing Program, Bartlett Hall, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003.

13. *Using Humor in Creative Writing for Middle School Students*.

The use of creative writing for elementary and middle school students is discussed in a health-science-language arts program designed to increase awareness of the hazards of smoking (30 min.).

Available through: June Berkley, Distinguished Visiting Educator, Ohio University–Chillicothe, Chillicothe, Ohio 45601.

14. *Language and Science in the Early Grades*.

A three-tape set designed to show language-across-the-curriculum methodology at work in three classrooms at three grade levels, in all cases science being the subject area focus (30 min., 3Q).

Direct requests to: Teresa Read, Director's Office, Division of Audio Visual Services, Education Building, Room 20, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada S7N OWO. Phone: 306/966–4270, or to Dr. Trevor J. Gambell, Curriculum Studies Department, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada S7N OWO. Phone: 306/966–7573.

15. *Writing Center Conferencing*.

A writing center conference is presented to illustrate principles of conferencing. Both good models and poor models are presented to facilitate discussion (20 min.).

Send inquiries to: Dr. Irene Clark, University of Southern California, Freshman Writing Program, HSS 201–MC 0062, Los Angeles, CA 90089–0062.

16. Jan V Productions Tape Set.

I. *Getting Literacy Started: Some Ways*. Kindergartners are taken through Sylvia Ashton-Warner's Key Vocabulary into writing their own ideas (45 min.); II. *Talking Teaching: A Dialogue*. Two teachers share experiences, ideas, and brainstorm (75 min.); III. *Whole Language in the Kindergarten*. Shows how sharing times lead into written language as the school year progresses. Demonstrates who needs a model of whole language teaching (45 min.); IV. *Whole Language in the Kindergarten #2*. Applies whole language teaching to the study of insects (45 min.); V. *The Experience Chart*. Taking dictation from a first grade class is demonstrated. What to say—what to write—how to lead from drafting a chart for the day into a writing session is shown (50 min.); VI. *Social Studies with Trade Books*. A demonstration showing children how to do research with library books (50 min.); VII. *Discussion Strategies*. Deals with how to set up a panel discussion; how to chair the discussion; how to keep order; shows how to structure an activity which brings the outside world into the classroom for examination (50 min.); VIII. *Embedding Skills in Writing*. Teacher demonstrates how to change from manuscript to cursive, how to write spontaneous, exciting, original stories and how to punctuate them (45 min.); IX. *Reading Stories Aloud*. Adults read to first graders, sixth graders and kindergartners. (45 min.).

Available through: Jan V Productions, P.O. Box 24293, Tempe, AZ 85282.

17. *Tool/Chest: Using Computers in the Classroom*.

Demonstrates teaching the concept of data base. Includes a review of the introductory lessons, the use of Venn Diagrams to enhance thinking, problem solving, and cooperative learning to solve a problem (30 min.).

Send inquiries to: Harriet Schweitzer, Project Tool/Chest, Bartle School, Mansfield Street, Highland Park, NJ 08904.

18. Yuba Feather School Tape Set.

I. *Methods of Teaching the Writing Process*. Teacher interviews explore the topics of creating an acceptable environment for writing, connecting art with writing, using oral language as a springboard to writing, using the word processor, writing in the content areas, and preparing students to write through the use of brainstorming and clustering (23 min.); II. *Implementing the Writing Process Schoolwide*. Interviews with school principal and faculty explore how they have developed a successful writing program (15 min., 3Q-B).

Available through: Lou Nevins, IMC Foundation, State University at Chico, Chico, CA 95929-0005.

19. *"Macbeth": Confronting the Text*.

An exploration of the creative and interpretive process as two actors, a director, and a Shakespeare scholar prepare and rehearse *Macbeth*, Act I, scene vii (59 min., B).

Available through: Continuing Education, The University of Iowa, 108 Seashore Hall, Iowa City, IA 52242, or through Professor Miriam Gilbert, Department of English, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa 52242.

Any individual, group or organization that wishes to submit videotape or film materials produced for inservice purposes for review by the NCTE committee should send copies of the materials and accompanying guidebooks or printed information to: Dr. Allan Dittmer, Chairman, Department of Secondary Education, University of Louisville, Louisville, KY 40292. Phone: 502/588–6591.

OBSERVING OUR COUNTERPARTS: A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY

by Joy Marks Gray
Gilmour Academy, Gates Mills, Ohio

When given the opportunity for a professional development day, our staff at Gilmour Academy, a Catholic, independent, college preparatory school, wished to attend other schools to observe their respective departments. We decided to attend classes at a suburban public high school that had a strong college preparatory track as well as a vocational track. With that school's department head, we coordinated schedules for the members of our department so that they would see as many different course offerings as possible and as coordinated with each teacher's own course load. Each teacher had an opportunity to view three or four classes, and I had a chance to talk with my counterpart to discuss our duties as chairpersons as well as to commiserate over shared headaches. We had an enjoyable and eye-opening day.

We discovered how much we had in common with English teachers in other schools. Without occasionally escaping from our own narrow worlds, we fall into the trap of thinking our problems are unique. Having the occasion to peer into our neighbors' classrooms allowed us to regain some perspective.

Along the same lines, we discovered that English teachers everywhere are busy people. In addition to heavy course loads and the attendant paper loads, we have school duties and after school activities or sports to advise or coach. The paper load is what separates us from the other disciplines and their work loads. Again it was reassuring to discover some others who share our lunacy in choosing a profession.

We did, however, discover a major difference between our two schools' approaches to weekly writing assignments. At the school we visited, much of the writing was ungraded or graded with check marks, whereas all our writing assignments were corrected and graded. Both approaches to handling the paper load are valid in the writing process, but class size seems to be an important factor in deciding which approach to use—their classes range in size from 15 to 28 students, while our classes contain a maximum of 18 students. Nevertheless, observing their procedures gave us some food for thought.

Because we were in the planning stages for our own writing lab, we were particularly interested in how their writing lab was set up, staffed, and utilized. We took with us some good ideas that we were able to incorporate into our newly developing lab. We also picked the brains of their SAT prep teachers since we were in the throes of establishing our own SAT prep course, as much as we hate the idea of teaching toward taking a test.

Their department chairperson and I discovered that we functioned in many of the same ways: liaison between our members and the administration; librarian and stock clerk for the multitude of books purchased through state funding; classroom observer; soother of ruffled feathers and calmer of paranoias; and, of course, lover of the literature and the power of the written word. We found we both enjoyed our roles in the classroom and within the department—headaches and all.

When our professional day ended, we found ourselves curiously refreshed, even though we had spent the day in school. We were rejuvenated by the discovery that English teachers share something special, no matter what school they are in, and the simultaneous rediscovery of the positive aspects of our own school, which often become buried in the mundane, daily routine so familiar to us. That we observed as a department instead of individuals helped strengthen an already strong bond among us, even though we are a department made up of quite diverse personalities. We were able to return to our own classrooms the next day with the enthusiasm of having seen new ideas but also with the confidence that many or most of our tried-and-true approaches really were good.

PROFESSIONAL STUDY GROUPS: COLLEGIALITY FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF INSTRUCTION

by Ken Mitchell
Nyack High School, New York

Too often classroom teachers operate in a professional vacuum. A classroom teacher rarely finds an opportunity to share ideas regarding methodology, research, and course content, once having completed four years of undergraduate training, two or more years of graduate work, and a course here or there. As a result, it becomes easy for one to continue practicing methods that have apparently worked for years but are often outdated or ineffective. For example, many English teachers have equated grammar instruction with writing instruction; however, a vast body of research, gathered over the past thirty years, has proven that this traditional approach to writing is quite ineffective and even deleterious, as some studies have shown. Yet, teachers still have students diagramming sentences. Effective and collegial professional development would discourage such practice, enlighten more teachers, and in the process, improve instruction.

While some teachers read professional journals and others attend workshops and conferences, often at their own expense, many educators are rarely provided with opportunities to share their experience and knowledge about their profession. Too many teachers depend on their districts to provide annual workshops for staff development, workshops that often reflect current trends or isssues but commonly lack follow-up and financial commitment.

There is, however, a growing body of research showing student academic achievement improves when there is an atmosphere of collegiality and peer support among the teachers. One means of creating such an atmosphere is by forming professional study groups to encourage teachers to exchange their ideas on issues that are pertinent to them.

In the fall of 1987, a group of teachers at Nyack High School in Nyack, New York, organized a study group that examined the issues related to the teaching of writing. It was called "A Seminar on the Teaching of Writing." As the facilitator of the group, I had four tasks: recruiting teachers; creating a list of topics for discussion; identifying, retrieving, and disseminating articles or sections of texts addressing the interests of the group; and coordinating the logistics of the meeting time and place.

Ten teachers—six English, two foreign language, and two special education—expressed an interest in the seminar. The makeup of the groups varied from session to session because not everyone was equally interested in every topic. However, we never had fewer than five teachers in a session, and everyone in the group wanted the materials for each session. A total of six sessions were held on the third Wednesday of each month. Each one-hour session was held immediately after school, and some even lasted well past the scheduled time.

One week before the session, each teacher received a packet of readings. The group discussed each reading and how it related to each teacher's particular needs. As a result of such discussions, new issues arose. It soon became evident that the new issues were as important as those on the agenda.

The seminar in writing topics were as follows: "Research in Written Composition," "Writing and Thinking," "Interdisciplinary Writing," "Peer Editing," "Approaches to Writing: Traditional, Process, and Environmental, and Evaluating Writing."

These were sessions of enlightenment for some, while for others they were an opportunity to share expertise and experiences with others. I was amazed to discover that some teachers were unaware of journal writing, peer editing, or process writing. One senior member of the group constantly challenged the research, yet she returned to her classroom to experiment with some of the group's findings. Teachers shared materials and visited one another's classrooms. But the question that surfaced from the groups after each session was, "Why haven't we done this before?" Subsequently, a study group has been established to examine "Issues in Education."

This type of professional study group provides teachers with the opportunity to share ideas, methods, and materials. It allows teachers to experiment in the classroom and return to the group to discuss results. A study group provides the teacher with state-of-the-art approaches that are research based. But most importantly, it reaffirms the assertion that teachers are indeed profes-

sionals who operate from a specific body of knowledge and have the ability to initiate and continue their own staff development. Such professionalism cannot help but improve classroom instruction.

CSSEDC NEWS

At its twentieth annual convention, the Conference for Secondary School English Department Chairpersons met at the Adam's Mark Hotel in St. Louis, Missouri. With the theme, "CSSEDC: The Heartbeat," the convention saw the largest number of registrants since San Antonio, Texas. The program, chaired by Debbie McCullar of Casper, Wyoming, was highlighted by a keynote address given by Nancie Atwell. The author of *In the Middle—Writing, Reading and Learning with Adolescents* spoke about the need to encourage thoughtfulness in our students rather than trying to teach them something called "critical thinking."

An election held during the first day of the convention filled three vacancies on the executive committee created by the expiration of the terms of Mary Getty of Galveston, Texas, Past Chair; Shirley Lyster of Columbus, Indiana, and Donald Stephan of Sidney, Ohio, Members-at-Large. Myles Eley of Indianapolis, Indiana, was elected Associate Chair and Ira Hayes of Syosset, New York, and Deborah Smith McCullar, of Casper, Wyoming were elected Members-at-Large.

Thomas Jones of Plymouth, Pennsylvania, was appointed Membership Chair to replace Myles Eley, and Susan Hayles-Berbower of Huntington Beach, California, was appointed Corresponding Secretary to replace Thomas Jones.

The second annual CSSEDC award for the best article published during the preceding year was presented at the NCTE luncheon for the Secondary Section to Jackie Swensson for her article, "New Teacher Packet." The article was chosen not only for its message and its writing quality, but also for its having something to say of special concern to chairs. The judges for the award were Driek Zirinsky, former editor of the *Quarterly*, Wendell Schwartz of Prairie View, Illinois, Judith Kelly of Washington, D.C., and Terry Wansor of Greensburg, Pennsylvania.

The annual convention also included the ascension of Wendell Schwartz to the position of Chair of CSSEDC for 1988–89 and the subsequent movement of Emil Sanzari to the position of Past Chair.

CALLS FOR MANUSCRIPTS—PLANS FOR FUTURE ISSUES

The *CSSEDC Quarterly*, a publication of the Conference for Secondary School English Department Chairpersons of NCTE, seeks articles of 250–3,000 words on topics of interest to English department leaders. Informal, firsthand accounts of successful department activities are encouraged.

Recent surveys of our readers reveal these topics of interest: leadership training for the new department chair; class size/class load; support from the business community; censorship issues; problems for rural schools; reading/writing centers; and whole language curriculum. Short articles on these and other concerns are published in every issue. In addition, upcoming issues will have these themes:

October 1989 (July 1 deadline):
Research in the Classroom: Projects, Plans, Procedures

December 1989 (September 15 deadline):
Student Teacher Training Programs

February 1990 (November 1 deadline):
Seniors: Innovative Ideas for the Fourth Year

May 1990 (February 1 deadline):
Supervision/Observation/Evaluation

Manuscripts may be sent on 5.25- or 3.5-inch floppy disks, with IBM compatible ASCII files or as traditional double-spaced typed copy.

Address articles and inquiries to: James Strickland, Editor, *CSSEDC Quarterly*, English Department, Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania, 16057–1326.

NCTE CRITICS CHARGE FEDERAL REPORT GIVES MISLEADING ADVICE ABOUT TEACHING OF READING

Becoming a Nation of Readers, a federally sponsored 1985 report, offered a plan for solving persistent reading problems of U.S. students. Now a group of teacher educators and reading researchers, among them members of the Commission on Reading of the National Council of Teachers of English, have taken exception to aspects of that report. They say its omissions and generalizations—some politically motivated—can tempt state and local school officials to continue ineffective reading programs and to create new ones based on faulty premises. These critics' views appear in *Counterpoint and Beyond: A Response to "Becoming a Nation of Readers,"* edited by Jane L. Davidson of Northern Illinois University and published by NCTE.

The federal report, issued by the National Institute of Education, U.S. Department of Education, claimed to distill all recent research significant for the teaching of reading. But researcher Kenneth S. Goodman of the University of Arizona charges that while it is "highly sophisticated" in dealing with reading comprehension, it is "incredibly naive" on subjects such as "classroom realities" and "parent-child interaction, particularly in minority homes."

Because *Becoming a Nation of Readers* features the views of cognitive psychologists but omits those of teachers or researchers studying literacy, Goodman adds, it "vacillates between holistic and atomistic" views of literacy development in prescribing classroom approaches to reading. Thus, he says, it can be used to justify elementary programs that employ worksheets, basal readers, and phonics drills, but it offers none of the engrossing stories and "whole language" activities that make children *want* to read.

What teachers and principals do every day "affects individual children much more than the official curriculum," researcher Gay Su Pinnell of Ohio State University observes. The federal report, she notes, never tells local educators *how* to develop effective reading programs for their students.

Pinnell examines nine recommendations from *Becoming a Nation of Readers*, listing "expected gains" and "enduring concerns" for each. Its authors' advice that "preschool and kindergarten reading readiness programs should focus on reading, writing, and oral language" is too vague, she says. It could be interpreted as a call to jettison activities that "look like play but involve exploration and problem solving" and to replace them with skill drills.

The federal report tells teachers to "devote more time to comprehension instruction," Pinnell writes, but it fails to acknowledge that because "comprehension" can't be directly taught or measured, teachers must develop new classroom strategies. Collegial planning and staff development at the building level will be needed, she insists, to implement recommendations for "less" reliance on worksheets, more independent reading, and "better assessment" of reading and writing.

Nine more essays in *Counterpoint and Beyond* criticize other

aspects of *Becoming a Nation of Readers*. David Bloome, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and his coauthors point out that "proficiency in reading" is never defined in the federal report. They also ponder the significance of metaphors used by its authors (learning as work rather than as exploration for meaning; reading problems as diseases—something that's wrong with the child).

(Counterpoint and Beyond: A Response to "Becoming a Nation of Readers," edited by Jane L. Davidson. 112 pages, paperbound. Includes bibliographies. Price: $6.25; NCTE members, $4.95. ISBN: 0–8141–0876–8. LC: 88–22541. Audience: Local and state curriculum planners, education policymakers and administrators, teachers of English language arts, teachers of reading, teacher educators. Available from NCTE, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801. Stock No. 08768–015.)

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NEW EDITION OF NCTE BOOKLIST OFFERS GOOD READING CHOICES FOR SENIOR HIGH STUDENTS

A new guide to engrossing books, just published by the National Council of Teachers of English, seeks to help students develop an enthusiasm for reading that can open doors to college, careers, and richer lives. *Books for You: A Booklist for Senior High Students*, appears as the nation's business leaders and educators mobilize to combat the widespread failure ot U.S. youth to become competent readers.

Sparking and maintaining young adults' interest in books is the aim of the tenth edition of *Books for You*. One of three major NCTE guides to current reading for different age groups, it describes nearly 1,200 well-written fiction and nonfiction titles for young adults, published from 1985 through 1987. This reference tool, widely used by students, teachers, and librarians, was compiled by a committee of English teachers, librarians, and school administrators. The committee evaluated, annotated, and solicited teenagers' responses to over 4,000 books in preparing this volume. Richard F. Abrahamson, University of Houston, and Betty Carter, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas, cochairs of the Committee on the Senior High School Booklist, edited the 1988 edition.

Titles gathered in this booklist are arranged under 47 headings, among them "Careers and Jobs," "Computer Technology," "Dating and Sexual Awareness," "Family Relationships," "History and Geography," "Humor and Satire," "Music and Dance," "Outdoor Life and Travel," "Science Fiction," "Space and Space Exploration," and "Sports and Recreation." Features of this edition are new categories: "Airplanes and Automobiles," "Colleges," "Personal Grooming and Self-Improvement," and "School Stories." The descriptions are designed to help high school readers find books that interest them, whether for school assignments or for their own enjoyment.

(*Books for You: A Booklist for Senior High Students*, edited by Richard F. Abrahamson and Betty Carter. 507 pages, paperbound. Price: $12.95; NCTE members, $9.95. ISBN: 0–8141–0364–2. LC: 88–25367. Audience: high school students, teachers, librarians. Available from NCTE, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801. Stock No. 03642–015.)

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CSSEDC Quarterly

Conference for Secondary School English Department Chairpersons

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In This Issue

ARTICULATION PROGRAMS

by James Strickland, editor

After hearing of an innovative approach to collaborative efforts between high schools and colleges, one where teachers actually work in each other's classrooms, I issued a call for articles focusing on articulation. I was fortunate enough to persuade one of the persons responsible for that unique program to share some insights with the readers of the *Quarterly*.

Thus, the first article is by Donald A. McAndrew, a professor of English Education at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. I've said more than once, watching Don teach, that he's the kind of teacher I want to be when I grow up. Don's knowledge about what is needed for articulation programs comes from having taught high school, junior college, and university classes. Don describes the Co-teaching Project he helped shape, a program allowing faculty from his university and teachers from the area high schools to learn from each other by teaching in each other's classes. I think you will find it an inspiration.

The second article is written by Herb Thompson, an assistant professor of Education and the director of Elementary Education at Neff Education Center of Emory & Henry College in Virginia. Herb, himself a former high school English teacher and department chairperson, writes of a cooperative program between his students and a local school system. His article, subtitled, "All You Have To Do Is Ask," reflects his belief that high schools frequently fail to make active use of the college resources, human and otherwise, available to them.

The third article is written by Eileen Oliver, an assistant professor of English at St. Cloud State University in Minnesota. Eileen's article reminds me of a conversation with someone during the Secondary Luncheon at the last NCTE conference. The high school teacher I was seated next to asked me what the one thing was high school students should be taught before they enter college. I couldn't think of any one thing, so I just told him to stop teaching them the term paper. Eileen is a lot more helpful; she offers six suggestions for high school teachers and their students.

The fourth article is written by Kevin C. McHugh, who teaches at the Finneytown Junior and Senior High School in Cincinnati, Ohio. Kevin, a member-at-large representative to the Executive Board of CSSEDC, reports his findings from a survey of those present at the CSSEDC conference in St. Louis. His report is a preliminary one, because he hopes to hear from the readership of this *Quarterly* in answer to his survey of the most critical issues to be addressed by CSSEDC in the next decade.

I concluded my remarks in the last issue by mentioning what someone had said at the last CSSEDC conference about xeroxing articles from the *Quarterly*, and then distributing them for discussion at a department meeting. The experience was repeated two months later when I spoke to the chairperson of the English department at my daughter's high school. The chair said she was planning to use the articles from the *Quarterly* for the department meeting preceding their professional development days. I hope more department chairpersons find the *Quarterly* useful for department meetings and that they write articles for upcoming issues of the *Quarterly*. I continue to be encouraged.

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THE CO-TEACHING PROJECT

by Donald A. McAndrew
Indiana University of Pennsylvania

For four years, I have been involved with the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Co-teaching Project, a successful university/secondary school partnership program. Before describing the design of the project and its success, it is important to describe its history, since much of the original impetus came from experiences common to many schools.

History of the IUP Project

The impetus for the Co-teaching Project came from the concern of area school districts about meeting recently enacted state minimum competency standards. In a regular monthly meeting with the director of the regional state educational services unit, area superintendents expressed their concern about meeting the new state standards in writing, wondering aloud if their present curriculum and staff were up to the task. At this point, the director suggested that superintendents invite specialists in the teaching of writing to their next meeting to discuss the issues involved. Two colleagues from the university, our dean, and I attended the next meeting and participated in a candid sharing of concerns about meeting the minimum competency standards. The superintendents asked us to return to their next meeting with a proposal on how to better prepare their curriculum and staff to meet the standards. We felt that teacher representatives should be invited to the next meeting.

At that meeting, a preliminary design of the Co-teaching Project was presented to the superintendents, the director, and several interested teachers, most of whom were chairs of English departments. This meeting was also attended by the president of Indiana University of Pennsylvania, who had been active in partnership and community outreach activities for several years. The design of the project was revised according to the responses of all present and prepared in final form for the next meeting.

Design of the Project

The project had four levels, each allowing for districts to join in a fashion most appropriate to their needs and resources.

Level One—Faculty Observation

At its least complex, the project allowed secondary school and university faculty to spend time in each other's classrooms, seeing teachers and students at work, discussing issues important to both, and discovering differences unique to each. At Level One, the purpose was to exchange information, and the expected result was knowing more about each other.

Level Two—Co-teaching

At this level, the design became more complex and reached a true co-teaching situation. Weekly, for at least a quarter, two to four secondary school teachers visited the university faculty's classrooms, and the university faculty visited one class each of these secondary school teachers. All teachers were expected to co-teach in each other's classes, making these visits much more than observational in nature. Since the university faculty involved in the project taught their introductory writing classes as writing workshops, secondary school teachers had a chance to watch a type of instruction that many were less familiar with and a chance to try that instruction in the university faculty's class. The university faculty then modeled writing workshops in the secondary school class, and later, as the secondary school teachers became comfortable and confident with that type of instruction, they tried it in their own classes. Level Two, then, had a built-in professional development component, the training being informal and individualized. Level Two, as with all subsequent levels, was nested within the previous level, meeting the informational objectives of Level One.

Level Three—Teacher Training

On this level, teacher training became one of the formal and explicit purposes of the project. The secondary school teachers, acting as co-teachers, learned the writing workshop method described in Level Two, but their goal was more than to just become comfortable and confident with it in their own classes. They were to prepare inservice training for all secondary school teachers in their English departments, learning and then teaching their colleagues. Level Three projects were of a longer duration—at least a semester, if not a year or two. The objectives reflected the previous levels—information exchanged and co-teachers learning the writing workshop strategies. At this level, however, all English teachers were trained in a continuing inservice program, duplicating the co-teaching model within each district, co-teachers and teachers visiting each other's classes, modeling and trying out the workshop classroom. The final result was that all secondary school teachers received inservice training in the latest techniques for teaching writing.

The university faculty's role shifted at midpoint in the project. At first, the university faculty acted as co-teachers with the secondary school teachers. Then, as the secondary school teachers began to plan the training of their colleagues, the university faculty began to shift more and more toward the role of composition experts, assisting the teachers with developing their inservice training plans and finally acting as facilitator/evaluators of the peer inservice training done within the district by the teachers.

Level Four—Writing Across the Curriculum

At this level, an additional dimension was added—writing across the curriculum. Once all the English teachers had been involved with Level Three projects, they worked with colleagues in other subject areas, showing how the writing workshop can be used as a mode of learning in any classroom for any subject. The university faculty continued their involvement in the final writing-across-the-curriculum phase as facilitator/evaluators, but at this level, the university faculty took a still more expert stance, directly training subject-area faculty in issues/methods that the co-teachers thought were important to share. The final outcome was not only a faculty well versed in the latest techniques of teaching writing but also familiar with the powerful place of writing in their subject-area classes.

Reasons for the Four Levels

The reasons for the four-level design closely relate to the reasons for the success of the Co-teaching Project. As mentioned earlier, the preliminary design was revised according to the responses of superintendents and teachers. The final design, therefore, met the needs as understood by insiders, rather than the needs that theory and research on teaching writing might tell us or the needs the university faculty composition specialists might have understood. From the responses, we found some wanted to know what their colleagues in college were doing; others wanted to improve the teaching of writing in their district; and still others wanted to begin a writing-across-the-curriculum program, having heard good things about it at a recent professional conference.

In designing a four-level project, we saw information as the easiest objective to meet, improvement in teaching as moderately difficult, and writing across the curriculum as the most complex, since we believed that a successful writing-across-the-curriculum

program depended on an English faculty already knowledgeable about current thinking in teaching writing. Thus, one level was nested within previous levels, each level assuming those before.

The four-level design also allowed districts to participate at whatever level of fiscal commitment was possible, most monies being spent for substitutes for the secondary school teachers while co-teaching in the university faculty's class. The four-level design also insured that each level would receive the time on task necessary to improve the teaching of writing, duration being a factor for success. This avoided the problem documented in research on effective inservice programs, namely, blitzkrieg training that is shortlived because there is no ongoing support for teachers learning new ways to teach. For example, faculty observation was accomplished quickly, but writing across the curriculum required much more time. Everyone knew the time commitment required going in.

The design also responded to the research on effective inservice programs by trying to incorporate peer training, another characteristic of successful programs, implicitly and explicitly in the project. The university faculty/secondary school teachers relationship was seen as two peers, both teaching writing, one teaching students a bit older than the other. Peer training was implicit in this relationship; it became explicit in Levels Three and Four when secondary school teachers trained fellow secondary school teachers, whether they taught English or other subject areas. And, finally, the design made another characteristic of successful programs, "learning by doing," the primary teaching mechanism of the project, teachers watching and teaching, creating a hands-on inservice in the teaching of writing.

Reasons for Success

Several reasons for the success of the Co-teaching Project are immediately apparent in the description of the design: first, participants perceived needs were given their due; second, participation could be adjusted to each district's fiscal capabilities; third, enough time was scheduled from the beginning; fourth, peer training predominated in the project; and fifth, learning was accomplished by doing. All of these are important reasons for success, but one, the fourth, was particularly important. The peer-to-peer training, whether implicit in the relationship of the university faculty and co-teachers or explicit between the co-teachers and their secondary school colleagues, gave those involved a new sense of capability, confidence, and concern for their professional development and that of their colleagues.

Three additional reasons for success should also be mentioned. First, the project was grounded on a broad base: namely, the involvement of the superintendents and secondary school teachers, the university faculty, president, and dean, and the regional educational services director. This broad base focused on the issue of improving the teaching of writing, and in doing so, exemplified the real power of partnerships. Second, the design was further tailored to specific circumstances in each district. For example, several districts found that having teachers out of class once a week was too disruptive to instruction, so they asked that their teachers visit every other week, the university faculty visiting on the intervening weeks. Since the learning would happen at a slower rate, they agreed to extend the time. In another district, only the English chair was involved, saving money on substitutes without losing quality because the chair was already an energetic and respected peer-trainer. Third and finally, the teaching/learning that occurred was individualized to each teacher and each teacher's classroom concerns. For example, some teachers wanted to improve their skills with using peer response groups, others wanted to be better at traditional teacher written response, and still others needed to become better at basic management/discipline before beginning writing workshops. Teachers asked to learn what they felt they needed to learn, and the university faculty guided this learning to allow them to operationalize as much as they could of the current state of the art in teaching writing.

In closing, I would like to mention two side effects of the project, one on the English Education program in which I teach, the other on the teachers themselves. The English Education program profited from this project in three ways. First, getting some of its faculty back into real schools, into the teaching context for which they train professionals, did much to decrease the "ivory tower" gap. Second, when university faculty went to the secondary school teachers' classes, they began to take one or two undergraduate English Education majors with them, not only to watch the university faculty and secondary school teachers co-teach but also to watch practicing professional educators learning through collaboration—a lesson it was hoped they would carry to their own work in schools. Finally, the English Education program was able to develop a new pool of available cooperating teachers for its student teaching experience. Many of the new co-ops were former co-teachers, trained to order by their experiences in the project.

The teachers themselves profited from a side effect. Many of them began to question what they had done in class and what they were now being asked to do. They became teacher-learner/researchers, watching their practice, questioning it, seeking answers—several eventually taking the more formal route to answers by applying for district and extramural funds for research or instructional development. Ultimately, what began as a project to better meet state mandated minimum competencies in writing ended as a project that met English teacher maximum competencies, that is, teachers becoming more independent, assured, and professional. These outcomes pleased everyone involved and must please anyone who counts on schools as the major teachers of literacy.

HIGH SCHOOL/COLLEGE COLLABORATION: ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS ASK

by Edgar H. Thompson
Emory & Henry College, Virginia

Of the many ways that colleges and public high schools can and do support each other, a source of cooperation not usually tapped involves college students. Even though college students observe public school classes and do their student teaching in public schools, seldom do they do anything in between these two extremes. I have found a way to bridge this gap.

The Collaboration

A local reading/language arts supervisor approached me two years ago and asked if I, or some of my students, would organize and conduct a special writing program for gifted students. The students who were asked to participate included those who were preparing to teach either at the elementary or the secondary levels.

What has since evolved is a program where from 10 to 25 of my college students, trained to teach writing (actually they have learned how to organize a classroom so that writing can be learned), provide programs that integrate writing with other special areas of study for gifted students, in the elementary classes K–7. One group has worked with poetry writing and astronomy. Another group has worked with Latin and French and writing. Another school wanted work on writing that used the constitution

as a focus for content. Another school did a newspaper for the first time with my students' help. Some of the elementary students have prepared puppet plays for production in their schools. Others have prepared booklets of writing to be shared with parents and other students.

Depending on the students' preference, and the schools' desires, my students worked either individually or in teams made up of as many as four students. These programs lasted from late March to early May and my students went to the schools once a week for six to eight weeks.

Benefits of Cooperation

This program has been a success for everyone concerned. My students have gotten some valuable "hands on" experience working with real children, implementing theory that they have studied and practiced in my classes. In addition to the experience, my students receive letters of reference regarding their participation in the program written by the school principals and the language arts supervisor, which, of course, my students put into their placement files. The schools gain because their students receive instruction that they might not otherwise have received. Of course, I do not mean to suggest in any way that the school's regular teachers could not have provided the instruction. However, many of them have been unable to work such activities into their already overloaded schedules, because of the very real pressure they are under to comply with curriculum restraints.

Implementing the Program

This entire program was easy to implement. It required a minimum of supervision by me, the language arts supervisor, the teachers and the principals. I held a couple of training sessions with the students before they went into the schools, and I made myself available at specified times to help with problems they were having. The local language arts supervisor, whose idea began the project, polled the principals of the elementary schools to determine their needs. Together, the language arts supervisor and I assigned students to schools. The principals were then informed by letter about who was coming to their school and what they could expect. My students made the initial contact with the schools on their own, working out schedules which met with approval by all participating parties. From this point on, the program ran itself.

Although the project began with my students working in elementary schools, a similar program could easily be arranged for interested high school teachers. If the kind of assistance I have described here seems appealing, all one really has to do is ask. Most college people I know will jump at the chance to help. Our student teachers will benefit from the experience. High school classes will have an added dimension, and the colleges and public high schools will have found one more articulation program.

PROMOTING COOPERATION BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE WRITING PROGRAMS

by Eileen Oliver
St. Cloud State University, Minnesota

Preparing students for academic writing in college is a constant concern for high school English teachers. Questions about appropriate assignments and methods of instruction continue to surface as increasing numbers of students enter higher education. Working with teachers in an effort to lessen the distance between secondary and college composition courses, I have developed the following six principles which have been successful in promoting cooperation in high school and college writing programs.

Opportunity to Write

Whether or not they plan to enter college, all students should be given continued opportunity to write. Composing is a life-long process, beginning when students first start to generate prose and continuing throughout their "writing lives." Since writing quality improves over time, provide students with numerous writing activities as an integral part of their curriculum. Because the success of college writing depends on the composing fluency developed in earlier years, increasing students' composing experiences will enhance their success in subsequent writing programs.

Take the sting out of writing! Assign a variety of daily written communications, instead of infrequent, formal papers. For example, journal writing remains one of the most successful ways to initiate writers into the world of discourse. Students view journal writing, a technique that works with all ages and abilities, as a nonthreatening way to express their feelings confidentially and receive regular feedback from an interested adult. The teacher can add texture to the journal with occasional suggestions for topics and the student can use the journal as a resource for subsequent assignments.

Encourage group writing activities. During a literary unit, assign (or let groups select an interpretation of) a prevailing theme, character analysis, evaluation of style, and so on, making each individual responsible for a specific topic. This project culminates in a final group paper which can later be adapted for a panel presentation.

"Genre changes" are very popular writing activities and demonstrate to students their power over the written word. Select an interesting news article and have class members convert it into a short story. Or, have them create poetry based on the information given in entries from "personal" or "coming events" columns. Ask students to write their reactions to literature, current events, speakers, school issues, and so forth informally or in prepared assignments, letters for school publications, or internal monologues. The key is to provide students with a multitude of composing experiences so that they develop confidence in their ability to write.

Rhetorical Variety

Design assignments with breadth so that students develop a facility for writing with a variety of rhetorical aims. An early awareness of a "writer's purpose" gives students a better understanding of the choices available to them. Opportunities to write expressive, literary, informative, and persuasive discourse can be introduced to all students at any age and will provide excellent preparation for advanced composition required in college.

Most junior and senior high school students enjoy writing personal narratives and descriptions. Let them explore these modes and give lots of positive feedback. And don't stop there! Don't confine their literary pieces to the creative writing class. I have found talented writers in classes labeled "low," "average," and "college bound" who, when allowed to write in these literary forms, not only surprised their teachers, but themselves as well.

Students should also experiment with different modes of classification when presenting information. Demonstrate various ways to organize papers using familiar topics: compare and contrast high school with elementary school, math class with English class, responsibilities at home with those at school; describe the process of changing a tire, baking a cake, studying for finals, making a model airplane, getting along with your parents; classify the sports available at school, categories of mammals, or possibilities for future employment.

Because students at all ages relate to a number of current personal, local, and national issues which directly affect their lives,

they select persuasive topics quite easily when given the opportunity. Capitalize on this commitment and provide them with an opportunity to compose well-organized, logical arguments. By gathering data for informative and persuasive papers, students learn to conduct research. Encourage them to take advantage of school and community resources.

When attempting informative or persuasive discourse, beginning college writers often have difficulty. Their writing style is stiff—artificially formal—because they are unaccustomed to writing with these rhetorical aims. Never limit writing activity because of your students' age or ability. Giving our students more experience writing with these purposes at the secondary level will ensure more success with college writing.

Communicate with College Instructors

Communicate with local community college and college writing instructors. While gathering information about curricula and rhetorical expectations of college composition, you can offer a real service to college faculty who sometimes lack your pedagogical background. Sharing ideas and activities that work for you will be regarded as useful information. Possibilities for workshops, seminars and other forms of collaboration will surface through a few informal contacts.

A few years ago, I participated in a writing workshop attended by both high school and college writing teachers. Although the main topic dealt with cross-curricular writing, the discussion shifted to the unmotivated student writer. Taking the lead, high school teachers contributed a number of teaching strategies and shared theories of classroom pedagogy. In turn, the college instructors explained the major writing assignments required of entry-level students and described some of the weaknesses they observed in the students' secondary preparation. Many ideas and activities were swapped back and forth and arrangements were made for subsequent speaking and classroom visits, allowing college faculty insight into what goes on in the high schools while offering high school teachers specific information about what is expected of their students when they enter college.

Real Audiences

Let students write for real audiences. Since many jobs require writing of some sort, convince your students that they should experience "real world" writing, whether or not they plan to go to college. Let them prepare memos, letters, bulletins, newsletters, plays, poems, reports, and the like. Their limited conception of "teacher as audience" will expand into an acknowledgment of the existence of real readers.

Writers need audiences that are believable, so build appropriate audiences into writing assignments. Particularly successful composing practices include job inquiries, letters of application, and informative essays which explore the requirements, opportunities, and responsibilities of a career choice.

Journalistic and literary writings can be prepared for submission to appropriate publications, when students are given a list of possible places to submit their work, ranging from the school newspaper to national writing contests. Many teachers have had great success getting student contributions printed in local professional newsletters, public announcements, and other community publications. Others publish their own newsletters and/or literary collection, allowing everyone to "get into print." When it's for publication, you will be amazed at how willingly students revise.

Since the major focus of persuasive writing is the audience, don't miss this opportunity to develop students' audience awareness. Where there is a cause, there is an audience. Students enthusiastically write to parents, principals, congressional representatives, radio and talk show hosts, and so forth. Determine appropriate readers individually with your students and have them each write specifically for that audience. When some of the letters, statements, and requests receive replies, you'll never again have to convince students that writing has a purpose.

Writing as Thinking

Encourage writing as a thinking/learning tool. Provide students with activities which encourage learning through response writing, opinion queries, and group brainstorming exercises. Let them see that writing is not just a matter of submitting work to the teacher for a grade. Show them that writing helps them organize, classify, read critically, and learn. It is a way of thinking; it is a way of learning.

If you find out from your colleagues what topics your mutual students are currently learning about in those classes, writing exercises can offer a great opportunity to collaborate with other disciplines. Have students brainstorm in groups or freewrite individually, encouraging them to get down on paper as much information, as many insights, and as many questions as possible on specific subjects. Then show them how writing can organize the information they have. For example, if they are studying the various systems of the human body, demonstrate a classification system from which they can compose an essay. Or, if you don't want to use a linear-outline model, create Venn diagrams, topic trees, or other graphic representations of the information. These techniques provide students with valuable strategies for invention, facilitating thinking and learning.

The Adult Advisor Role

Change your role from "final evaluator" to "adult advisor." You are worth more to your students and their writing development if you keep in close touch with their work as it progresses. At the same time, you are freed from the constant, tedious obligation of grading everything they write. Just before you collect a writing assignment, either individually or from the entire group, arrange editorial sessions where students read each other's work and make necessary corrections. Be sure they understand that this procedure is not a revision process (which comes earlier), but an effort to remove careless errors which are so distracting for the reader. Provide them with a checklist of common editing concerns. I am always amazed at how quickly students find errors in other people's work. If you let them know that you are not their editor, they will quit expecting you to correct all their errors for them. As they take more responsibility for editing their own work, you will have more time to work with them on the larger rhetorical issues of content, purpose, and voice. This practice is a must if you ever want to get out of that "red-penciled rut."

Adopting these principles creates a "writer's environment," providing students with a positive, successful approach to composing which they will continue to use in college writing programs. The dialogue that is established between high school and college instructors encourages on-going cooperation and collaboration for better communication and improvement of the overall quality of student writing.

NO RESPECT: THE CSSEDC ST. LOUIS PRELIMINARY SURVEY

by Kevin C. McHugh
Finneytown Jr./Sr. High School, Cincinnati, Ohio

CSSEDC is an organization that now has the luxury of having grown beyond what Maslow might have described as its "deficiency needs." Thus, while taking great satisfaction in its fall con-

ference, its *Quarterly*, and the services that its committee members have performed for NCTE, the executive board of CSSEDC created a subcommittee to look to the future to see just what services it can and should provide its members. That subcommittee, made up of volunteers like myself, who wanted to know the direction CSSEDC should be taking in the upcoming years, took the next logical step—a preliminary poll of the membership.

CSSEDC members at the St. Louis conference were asked to identify what they regarded as the "critical issues" CSSEDC should be addressing. The poll was unscientific—3 x 5 cards placed at luncheon tables—and respondents were allowed to list as many concerns as they wished. A total of 118 cards were collected. (Others undoubtedly disappeared into purses or coat pockets—my own included.) The results of this survey include many items that only one person listed—my feeling being that each person's opinion is important, particularly in CSSEDC. For simplicity, however, I assumed a total of one hundred (100) cards with each "vote" representing one percent (1 percent). Having sampled the St. Louis membership surveys, nearly 50 percent of us complained about not getting any respect.

Job Definition

Some 21 percent took what I would call a "back to basics" perspective. They view as important what I have labeled as "Job Definition" issues. One department leader recommended that we publish job descriptions for chairpersons using those "from exemplary school districts," especially for school districts without written guidelines. Another, reflecting perhaps the Midwestern conference site, asked for more attention to the role of a department head in a "small rural school." "I need," said one, "to convince the principal of a small high school of 300 students that departmentalization is needed"—certainly a "basic" for an organization that calls itself a department chairpersons' organization.

Three people suggested that we devise recommended standards for department heads, while one thought it worthwhile to define the role of a member of an English department—a novel and, I think, significant variation. Others talked about a "support system" that could teach what "can't be found in books" about this position. Finally, one department head recommended that CSSEDC compile data to determine whether the stereotype that department heads just "teach the best" is true.

Curriculum Development

Not surprisingly, 32 percent commented on what I categorized as "curriculum development" issues. Five addressed articulation—"Our district has no K–12 program in language arts—every teacher does his own thing." One questioned if "the reading center is a dinosaur?" and asked for help in integrating reading in the English classroom; another echoed the same feeling, but about writing, and yet another asked, "Can we move away from the cubby-hole curriculum toward whole language instruction?" However, in this category, many members (10 percent) specifically challenged the epidemic of what they regarded as mindless "basics" testing: "Given increasing assessment demands," the result will be "course content overload and teacher schizophrenia." "All teachers," warned one of the respondents, "need to be made aware of the insidious, creeping stranglehold [that] testing is achieving all over this country." Besides, observed a sympathetic critic, people were looking for "hard data" from "tests that test the wrong things anyway."

As for "outcome-based education," some felt that too often the education that results is driven by tests, not outcomes. Seven department leaders viewed the education of the "at risk," "unconventional," or "nontraditional" student as critical. Some felt the needs of urban schools were not being addressed; others, the rural student. Finally, one wondered what we could do about the "growing number of students (whose parents are professionals) who do not read anything but assigned materials."

Supervision and Instruction

As for "Supervision and Instruction" issues, 26 percent of us saw such things as staff development and evaluation as key issues. "Under what circumstances," asked one, "should department chairs allow themselves to participate in state-mandated teacher evaluation?" Only one specifically raised the issue of "hiring and firing," but that sentiment reverberates in another comment: "Should we attempt to resuscitate those 'dead on their feet' teachers or help to pull the plug and put everyone out of their misery?" And, of course, we continue to hope that we can encourage the "veterans," the "burnouts," and the "budding" great teachers. As before, several people sought specific help for rural and urban schools.

Empowerment

Nothing in the survey brought such an outpouring of frustration as the responses I've identified as "empowerment" issues. Echoing comedian Rodney Dangerfield, what I hear our membership saying is, we don't get no respect. Department heads need time; teachers need time. Classes are too large. "Full class loads are intolerable" for department heads. "I need support [to help] my administrator to understand how overloaded I am." Help me "find the best way to get [clerical help], please!" begged one department chair. We need "upper limits" for class size, not "averages," complained another one of our members. Others pointed out that the class sizes proposed by national teacher associations, with their insistence on across-the-board class reductions, were actually counterproductive in English. Eighteen raised financial concerns—a "meaningful stipend" is needed for chairpersons or help in raising "funds for attending workshops like this wonderful conference." Overall, the tone was unmistakable, we don't get no respect.

Teacher Training

"Teacher Training" issues received five "votes," though I suspect that more of us shared the sentiment of one respondent that "English departments ought to be given more of the responsibility for teacher training (rather than the colleges)." Others, I am sure, share one member's urgent plea for earlier recruitment of minority teaching candidates.

Continuing Issues

Other issues could not be so neatly labeled. Four persons suggested that CSSEDC act as a clearinghouse of sorts, publishing grants, position papers, and the like. In fact, the group at the Wednesday morning "issues" breakfast in St. Louis responded very favorably to the idea of a department head's notebook or binder—a collection of tips, reading lists, censorship information, position papers (on grammar, evaluating compositions), and other similar material.

Four others raised the issue of censorship, the "growing attacks on good literature"; another four sought to increase CSSEDC and NCTE "clout" so that we do, in fact, secure more respect than we have at present. We need, said one of these "activists," to be "strong enough even to counter the positions of the NASSP [National Association of Secondary School Principals], NEA, AFT and others. Politically, we are not doing enough to affect the teaching lives of our members. The NCTE position about class (size),

for example, is considered a joke by its members, since it has no power," the writer concluded. Another argued, perhaps from an "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em" mentality, that we ought to strengthen our ties with the NASSP; a third, that we ought to affiliate with the Association of Departments of English of the Modern Language Association.

One frustrated ESL teacher (or a department head charged with ESL instruction) begged for anything dealing with curriculum and certification. Two others indicated that studying more closely and/or reporting on NCTE Centers of Excellence might answer some of our curriculum questions. And one member argued that CSSEDC ought to make a commitment to "nonsexist language" and promote "gender as a legitimate subject of analysis." There was more; I've organized the results into a survey. Share the information with your colleagues, discuss it, and then complete the attached mail-in survey. It will cost you a quarter, but I consider that an investment in getting a little respect.

CALLS FOR MANUSCRIPTS— PLANS FOR FUTURE ISSUES

The *CSSEDC Quarterly*, a publication of the Conference for Secondary School English Department Chairpersons of NCTE, seeks articles of 250–3,000 words on topics of interest to English department leaders. Informal, firsthand accounts of successful department activities are encouraged.

Recent surveys of our readers reveal these topics of interest: leadership training for the new department chair, class size/class load, support from the business community, censorship issues, problems for rural schools, reading/writing centers, and whole language curriculum. Short articles on these and other concerns are published in every issue. In addition, upcoming issues will have these themes:

October 1989 (July 1 deadline):
Writing-Across-the-Curriculum

December 1989 (September 15 deadline):
Conducting Research in the Classroom

February 1990 (November 1 deadline):
Student Teacher Training Programs

May 1990 (February 1 deadline):
Supervision/Observation/Evaluation

October 1990 (July 1 deadline):
Seniors: Innovative Ideas for the Fourth Year

December 1990 (September 15 deadline):
Effective Leadership

Manuscripts may be sent on 5.25- or 3.5-inch floppy disks, with IBM compatible ASCII files or as traditional double-spaced typed copy.

Address articles and inquiries to: James Strickland, Editor, *CSSEDC Quarterly*, English Department, Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania, 16057–1326.

FIFTY CRITICAL ISSUES: MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

At the St. Louis conference, CSSEDC members indicated issues of particular concern to them and generated the following items in their initial sampling. To participate in this survey, circle the numbers of the three issues that you feel are most critical, the ones you feel CSSEDC ought to address. The list is by no means complete, so feel free to elaborate on an issue you have circled or to add one that has not been included. Before completing this survey, you may wish to read the accompanying article, "No Respect." If you wish to keep your copy of the *Quarterly* intact, feel free to xerox the survey and submit the copy.

A. Job Definition Issues

1. defining the role of the English department chairperson, coordinator, etc.
2. defining the role of the English department member
3. increasing the authority/status of the department leader
4. promoting a strong departmental structure
5. establishing standards for department heads (recommendations/requirements)
6. publishing recommended qualifications for department heads
7. publishing job descriptions of department heads from exemplary schools

Other (please specify) _____

B. Curriculum Development Issues

8. increasing teacher input in curriculum
9. improving K–12 articulation
10. improving K–16 articulation
11. integrating the language arts curriculum
12. designing the curriculum of the future
13. developing more productive curricula for the "basic" and/or "at risk" student
14. dealing with "basic skills" testing, the emphasis on "hard data," and the trend toward a national curriculum
15. involving teachers in classroom research

Other (please specify) _____

C. Supervision and Instruction Issues

16. evaluating teachers/instruction
17. dealing with state-mandated teacher evaluation
18. determining the extent to which department heads ought to control the hiring and firing of teachers
19. promoting, creating, controlling staff development
20. improving instruction through peer assistance
21. motivating discouraged or stagnant teachers
22. helping teachers deal with "turned off" kids
23. establishing writing centers

Other (please specify) _____

D. Empowerment Issues

24. increasing release time (for department heads and English teachers)
25. reducing class size and teacher workload (possibly by setting upper limits rather than by using an "average" figure)
26. educating administrators about class size
27. obtaining community support for smaller classes
28. helping teachers "stuck" with large classes to develop strategies for coping with those classes
29. getting clerical assistance
30. securing a "meaningful stipend" for department heads
31. securing funding and/or opportunities to attend conferences and workshops
32. advising female department heads about the "politics" of handling male superiors

Other (please specify) _____

E. Teacher Training Issues

33. improving student teaching programs
34. recruiting minority teachers
35. developing effective mentoring system
36. developing partnership programs with higher education
37. developing teacher-as-learner/researcher projects
38. accessing funds for teacher-as-learner/researcher projects
39. learning from new teachers, who bring the most current understandings of the discipline and its pedagogy
40. learning from colleagues, especially those in graduate courses or attending professional workshops and meetings

Other (please specify) _____

F. Other Concerns

41. resisting censorship
42. publishing grade level reading lists (especially for minority students)
43. issuing position papers (e.g., on the teaching of grammar, or the evaluation of writing)
44. functioning as a clearinghouse for members (publishing a list of contact people and printed material on critical issues such as censorship, publishing a list of grants, fellowships, deadlines, requirements, etc.)
45. generating quality CSSEDC annual conference programs that balance classroom practices and supervision
46. generating CSSEDC annual conference programs of immediate assistance ("lots of handouts")
47. promoting/making use of NCTE Centers of Excellence
48. increasing the political "clout" of CSSEDC and NCTE
49. publishing a department heads' handbook containing NCTE and CSSEDC position statements, resources, etc.
50. Other (please specify) _____

Send your completed survey to: CSSEDC Survey, c/o Kevin C. McHugh, 6779 Sandalwood Lane, Cincinnati, Ohio 45224

CARNEGIE-MELLON UNIVERSITY SCHOLARS HONORED WITH BRADDOCK AWARD FOR *CCC* ARTICLE

Christina Haas, post-doctoral fellow at Carnegie-Mellon University, and Linda Flower, professor of rhetoric at Carnegie-Mellon University, are the winners of the 1989 Braddock Award for the best article on the teaching of writing to appear in *College Composition and Communication* last year. The award was presented at the Opening General Session of the Conference on College Composition and Communication annual convention at the Sheraton hotel.

The article, "Rhetorical Reading Strategies and the Construction of Meaning," was published in the May 1988 issue of *CCC*.

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Conference for Secondary School English Department Chairpersons

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In This Issue

THE WRITING CONNECTION

by James Strickland, editor

Many of us entered our profession with aspirations of becoming guardians of the literary canon. Once inside the classroom, we found ourselves guardians of the language, specifically, a standard edited English language. However, many of us abdicated that privileged role and, in doing so, found exciting new uses of writing—as a way of sharing with our colleagues in other disciplines, a way of causing curricular change, and a way of teaching ourselves and our students. This issue is given to these writing connections.

The first article is by Dr. Rita Pollard, of Niagara University, in Niagara, New York. Rita understands well the power of writing, having directed writing centers at the State University of New York at Buffalo and Niagara University, having served as the past editor of the *English Record*—the quarterly publication of the New York State English Council—and having chaired the Special Interest Group on Writing for the New York College Learning Skills Association. Rita makes the point that teachers in any discipline fear adding writing-across-the-curriculum (WAC) programs, not because they oppose writing but because they believe writing will increase their work load and siphon precious time away from their content-area presentations. Rita's article dispels those beliefs while offering practical advice for implementing successful WAC programs.

The second article, written by John Kent and Thomas Trevisani, Jr., respective chairs of the social studies and the English departments of Arlington Public Schools in Massachusetts, shows how they used writing-across-the-curriculum as a project for curricular and professional development. In the third article, Dr. Edward J. Borowiec, assistant chair of the English Department at California State University, Long Beach, reports on a study showing that the best secondary writers in the 11th and 12th grades perform well on college tests of writing proficiency and general literacy when measured against a variety of undergraduate and graduate writers, offering evidence and encouragement for those directing college preparatory programs.

The fourth article, by Mary Jane Reed, describes a series of inservice programs on the writing process at her school, Solon High School in Ohio, conducted by teachers trained in the National Writing Project. This year, Mary Jane will offer inservice workshops in writing-across-the-curriculum for every content-area teacher (7–12), testimony to the Solon school district's commitment to writing.

Finally, as an organization dedicated to "leadership for excellence," CSSEDC presents profiles of those candidates for the positions of Members-at-Large and directions for voting by mail before the November convention.

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WRITING-ACROSS-THE-CURRICULUM CHALLENGES PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

by Rita Pollard
Niagara University

It is often difficult to design professional development workshops that will persuade our colleagues in the English Department—let alone in science, math, and history—to use writing to support students' learning. The maxim, "a prophet is without honor in her own land," has probably taken on a new meaning for anyone who has ever attempted to implement a writing-across-the-curriculum (WAC) program. While teachers are not publicly opposed to better writing, their fear, misunderstanding, and resistance often make them reluctant participants in a WAC program.

Problems Impeding Professional Development

Teachers fear that participating in WAC will lead to their being buried beneath student papers that require careful grading. They also fear that commitment to WAC will mean more of their time will be spent teaching writing and less of their time will be available to cover the subject area, biology or American history, for example. These fears stem from teachers' misperceptions of the goals of WAC. Those charged with professional development, then, are challenged to address these misunderstandings by showing teachers that WAC's purpose is not to recruit them to perform the English Department's job. WAC asks them, rather, to provide students with opportunities to use ungraded, speculative writing to help them better learn course content. Instructors need to understand that this kind of writing—writing to discover—is different from what teachers most often assign—writing to evaluate what students already know. WAC advocates writing, not as a way to test, but rather as a way to teach, a process helping students make connections, synthesize and analyze course content in order to learn it better. WAC offers an approach to teaching, just as lecturing, class discussion, or instructional software offer approaches to teaching. Thus, WAC is not a course "add-on" but an integral course component. Selling this philosophy to fearful and even misinformed colleagues is tough. Sometimes, their defensive postures at staff development workshops preclude their hearing about WAC's real goals and prescind any positive outcomes of a WAC program. Professional development days must be structured to address those fears and misperceptions.

A second problem is that often teachers resist new programs, WAC included, which they perceive as being imposed upon them from the "top down." The design of a staff development workshop should ideally dissipate some of this resistance. From the literature examining how teachers change, studying effective WAC programs, and documenting the scores of curricular "reforms" that have died early deaths, we know that getting teachers to feel ownership of a new program is critical to real success and change—interest building from the "bottom up" rather than compliance forced from the "top down."

Faced with these political and attitudinal obstacles, how can those charged with staff development design effective WAC workshops for teachers across the disciplines? While I do not claim to have a definitive answer to this question, I do have some observations to offer culled from my three years of experimenting with workshop designs at my own institution, where I am an "in-house" WAC coordinator charged with organizing professional development days to teach my colleagues across the disciplines about WAC.

Inductive Workshops

Workshop activities that allow teachers to discover inductively the value of WAC are far more effective ways of encouraging teachers to buy into WAC than almost any other activity one can name. That is not to say that guest speakers or formal presentations about current composition research are not appropriate methods of delivering the information we would like teachers to have about WAC. What I am suggesting is that there is great power in inviting teachers to recall their own experiences with writing, in letting them first confirm for themselves writing's potential as a tool for fostering learning in their disciplines.

Let me share one example of an inductive workshop activity that I have found particularly persuasive, even for the most resistant colleagues. This activity, one I learned from Cynthia Selfe of Michigan Technological University, requires that teachers draw a diagram representing their "typical" method of composing. Participants, using acetate markers, draw diagrams, without words as labels, on plastic transparency sheets. Several diagrams, randomly chosen by the workshop facilitator, are displayed using an overhead projector. The diagrams' designers then explain their drawings to the workshop participants. Most often, participants show pictures of themselves rewriting and pondering, struggling to clarify what they want to say, sharing their work-in-progress with colleagues who can help them refine their thinking. From this talk and sharing, participants realize that writing is process and product. They also begin to understand that, as teachers, if we expect better "products" or performances from students, whether those products are class discussions, or answers to essay exam questions, or solutions to math problems, then perhaps we need to support students' meaning-making processes in our classrooms.

This realization provides a strategic entry point for discussing the ways ungraded, speculative writing can help students process information. Various writing activities, such as journals or reading/problem-solving logs, three-minute, end-of-class summaries of the day's lecture, and collaborative reaction papers, appeal to teachers as tools that encourage reflection and learning in their disciplines. Their own introspection teaches them how valuable these meaning-making activities can be. Teachers see how inappropriate grading would be of students' learning-in-process. They also see how such writing activities do not waste time needed to cover the curriculum, but do, in fact, help students better learn what needs to be covered. Those charged with training faculty to implement WAC techniques into their courses will want to consider the value of inductive activities when designing staff development workshops.

Participants' Altered Roles

WAC workshops are more effective when participants' roles move beyond the traditional role of "learner." The workshop agenda should be designed so that individual teachers assume various roles: leaders, collaborators/researchers, and supportive colleagues. As leaders, participants prepare to discuss readings from a bibliography given by the workshop facilitator well in advance of the workshop date. (More will be said about these readings later in this article.) As collaborators and researchers, teachers work with colleagues in their subject areas. In this role, they develop one or two WAC classroom activities they can incorporate into their classrooms, agreeing to report back to group members later in the semester on the results of their efforts. As supportive colleagues, they share their concerns and frustrations with the group and listen to help solve problems that their colleagues anticipate when implementing WAC in their classrooms.

Within this context, the traditional workshop "leader" becomes more of a facilitator who keeps track of time, ensures that all participants have a turn to speak, occasionally demonstrates or models WAC techniques, and focuses discussion, asking probing questions to keep the workshop on track. This workshop design respects participants' expertise in their own subject areas and provides them with the time, support, and response needed to risk change in their classrooms. At my own school and at many other schools where WAC programs are being implemented, such a workshop design seems to foster a sense of collegiality, consensus building, and a feeling of ownership that is critical to counteracting teachers' perceptions that WAC is another "top down" administrative mandate in which teachers have no voice.

Time for Reflection and Response

Professional development days organized to provide large blocks of "unstructured" time for teachers to read, write, and talk are more effective than those which offer the traditional day-long, "packed" menu of workshop sessions. Unfortunately, professional development day agendas do not often respect this need for extended time to process information and experiment with change. Many staff development days are scheduled so that teachers move through a series of one-hour sessions on a variety of topics. This day-long smorgasbord often offers teachers little more than "a bag of tricks" to try on Monday morning. Significant and lasting change is not fostered in this way. Instead, change occurs when teachers have time to examine their fundamental assumptions about language and learning, and time to consider research and theory relevant to their practice.

To successfully implement WAC, staff development days should be organized so that teachers have large blocks of time to read together, to write together, and to talk together. Before the designated development day, creative administrators find ways to provide time for teachers to read a collection of journal articles. They find ways to unclutter the conference day's agenda so teachers have time to reflect upon and respond to their professional reading. Creative administrators also find ways to provide time afterwards, throughout the semester, for teachers to collaborate and support one another's risk taking and change. Most importantly, they understand that professional development is not the product of a single conference day, but the product of careful and sustained nurturing.

The Important Catalyst

I offer all of these observations to underscore how delicate and labor-intensive launching a WAC program can be. Unless those charged with staff development—the most critical factor in the success of any school's WAC program—understand their colleagues' potential resistance and fears, the program may be destined to fail. My own experience has taught me that where writing is concerned, carefully planned staff development can foster real change in our colleagues' attitudes and practices.

LINKING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TO CURRICULAR CHANGE

by John Kent and Thomas Trevisani, Jr.
Arlington Public Schools, Massachusetts

As chairpersons of the social studies and the English departments, we began a writing-across-the-curriculum project with the belief in the importance of writing as a means to learn content in any discipline. As chairs of our respective departments, we shared a common desire: we sought a project for curricular development that would address both writing and professional development. The means to translate the idea of such a project into reality was provided by the passage of the Massachusetts Educational Reform Act. Chapter 188 of the Acts of 1985 provided, as part of the reform package, Horace Mann Grants for "public school teachers who take on expanded responsibilities within their schools or school districts. . . ." Under the conditions of the grant, a teacher or group of teachers could receive up to $2,500 to develop curricular innovations in their schools. We looked at writing-across-the-curriculum as an idea which would link a writing project with professional development at the local high school level.

As chairs of two different departments, we submitted to the local Horace Mann Review Committee a proposal to establish a collegial planning model linked to professional development for effecting curricular change. We proposed a procedure for interdepartmental cooperation among department chairs—much as we did with English and social studies—for planning and responding to curricular issues from a school-wide perspective, rather than from a discipline-based one. The result would be a professional development project linked to a writing-across-the-curriculum program for high school teachers from various disciplines.

Staff Development Preparation

We found three stages in staff development that are considered crucial to successful curricular change: involvement of teachers in readiness and awareness development, collegial planning, and teacher training.

In staff development, teachers must be treated as professionals and adult learners. This means that a primary goal of a professional development program has to be based on the acquisition of skills which fulfill the personal and professional needs of the teachers. A good staff development program demonstrates respect, trust, and concern for the adult learner, offering direct and concrete experiences where the learner applies what is being learned—learning by doing—and offering informal situations where social interactions are encouraged—learning with others.

Writing-Across-the-Curriculum Preparation

In order to incorporate the best of what was being done in the area of writing-across-the-curriculum, we sought out opportunities to learn, whenever possible, from successful national practitioners. One such opportunity was hearing Elliot Wigginham, of *Foxfire* fame, speak on "Using Writing to Learn." From Wigginham, we learned that high school students are able to create knowledge through the study of local history.

Local and national conferences of English and social studies organizations provided other opportunities to participate in workshops on writing-across-the-curriculum. At a national conference for social studies, Harry Stein, of the New Jersey State Department of Education, spoke about his state's writing program, the Academic Writing Project. From Stein, we learned that writing, as verbal or visual symbol-making used to make private thought public, varied according to the type of content students wanted to learn.

By June of that academic year, our staff development model was ready. We knew that staff development programs tied to curriculum development, such as writing-across-the-curriculum, require time, money, materials, and release time for teachers. We also knew that staff development was an ongoing process and that

teachers can best address their needs by identifying their own priorities and by planning collaboratively to meet those needs.

By the following fall, we were ready to present a series of alternating planning and training collaborative sessions. A timeline was created, detailing the major activities to be undertaken throughout the year to achieve the grant's goals.

We began, as English and social studies chairs, to jointly plan a day-long workshop to promote awareness of writing-across-the-curriculum for ten high school teachers chosen from the social studies, science, mathematics, business, and physical education disciplines.

In late September, we presented during the school day the first workshop for the ten teachers. The school system provided substitute coverage for the teachers and a conference room for the workshop. The workshop involved both the presenters and the participants in all five phases of development that we had discovered as important for effective staff development: theory, modeling, practice, feedback, and classroom application. The purpose of the first workshop was to provide teachers with an awareness of the need for writing in all curriculum areas in order to increase students' abilities to learn content. This meant that we had to personally involve each teacher from each discipline in the writing-to-learn process. Thus, we provided writing activities from the several disciplines represented and ones that teachers could easily learn at the workshop and implement the next day in their classroom. The final goal of the first workshop was to secure teacher commitment to using the ideas in their classrooms during the next two weeks.

In early October, the second part of the staff development occurred with a release-time afternoon workshop. The teachers shared the successes and difficulties they had experienced in their classes using writing-to-learn strategies in their various disciplines. Surprisingly, the teachers had many successes and few problems. During the afternoon session teachers—from the social studies, science, mathematics, business, and physical education departments—learned about the writing process model, how to teach students to write an historical essay, as well as how to utilize several outlining strategies. Finally, presenters and participants entered into collaborative planning to set up the agenda for the next two workshops which would be held after school in late October and early November.

The October session began with teachers from different departments sharing recent classroom experiences with writing. The workshop introduced techniques for using journals as a means to learn content. The November session repeated the sharing of classroom writing experiences and introduced various methods for evaluating student writing—holistic and analytic—and discussed future agendas, goals, and directions. At this meeting, the participants began to assume greater responsibility for the direction of the workshop, while the presenters relinquished control and took roles as fellow participants. Spirited exchanges about the different methodologies for evaluating student writing highlighted the afternoon's discussion.

Presenters and participants proposed various paths to travel in our quest to integrate writing into the high school curriculum. Several of the participants and presenters agreed to appear before the high school Parent Advisory Council as part of a panel on writing, explaining the concept of writing-across-the-curriculum and its implications for increasing students' abilities to learn content in the various disciplines. Others suggested a mapping project, in which the workshop participants would create a guidebook, mapping the various writing strategies and activities created in the workshop onto the different curricular content areas and disciplines. Some suggested expanding the scope of the writing-across-the-curriculum workshops to allow for increased involvement of teachers from other disciplines in the high school. Teachers finally suggested using a week or two in the summer for an intensive workshop on writing-across-the-curriculum, not merely to learn more about the concept, but to develop support networks and peer coaching relationships so crucial in any successful curricular implementation program.

Conclusion

After a year of interdepartmental collaboration, we have a good feeling when we read the recent reports that highlight the need for greater infusion of writing into instructional activities to develop students' writing abilities in all areas of study. We also feel good about the desirability of linking professional development for experienced teachers to curriculum development in order to effect curricular change at the local level. More importantly, we know writing-across-the-curriculum will never survive and prosper unless teachers and administrators together plan, train, and implement writing into the curriculum. Our year of collaboration has shown that. We believe, along with Edward B. Jenkinson, "that teachers can turn their classrooms into cooperative ventures in which teachers and students learn together. Thus it is said writing can revolutionize teaching and learning." However, we also realize that there is no one best way to teach or to use writing in the curriculum. Along with our colleagues, we firmly believe we have taken a first step in providing the teachers in our various departments with an important tool to incorporate into their teaching repertoire, one that will enable students to learn content better and to improve their writing skills.

THE COLLEGE PREPARATORY STUDENT: PERFORMANCE AND PROFICIENCY

by Edward J. Borowiec
California State University, Long Beach

Conventional wisdom holds that freshmen entering college-level writing programs will require considerable instruction and practice in writing in order to survive the rigorous academic regimen awaiting them. This belief implies that the student entering college is less than qualified, in terms of writing proficiency and general literacy, and that the secondary experience, in general, and the secondary writing program, in particular, have been less than adequate in preparing the student for college. Far too often, in far too many instances, these beliefs are responsible for friction between college and secondary departments of English.

At California State University we asked if these expectations had a basis in fact. In essence, two principal questions were addressed: how do the best secondary writers, in the 11th and 12th grades, perform on college tests of writing proficiency and general literacy as against a variety of undergraduate and graduate writers, and what might the findings portend for renewed efforts promoting secondary-college articulation?

The Study

During a ten-year study, California State University investigated the success rates of college preparatory writers in completing college writing courses and in writing proficiency examinations. We extracted data from a variety of sources—from the results of the English Placement Test (EPT), which more than 30,000 students entering the 19 campuses of the California State University system take each year, and from several internal programs and follow-up studies involving the University of California, Califor-

nia State University, community colleges, and a cross section of secondary schools in California.

Student writing performance was examined at the secondary level, the college entry and exit levels, and at the graduate and professional school levels. In large measure, secondary students had been identified as college preparatory, advanced placement, or honors students and were subjected to the writing proficiency requirements and standards that they would eventually encounter in college—at both the lower and upper-division levels. Additional information about secondary writers was garnered through reviews of transcripts, interviews with instructors and students, and assessments of writing programs and school curricula.

The Instrument

For the most part, the measures of writing proficiency were holistically-scored instruments developed by California State University faculty. The professional school instrument, though scored entirely by California State University faculty, was jointly developed by California State University English faculty and a national advisory group. Some of the instruments contained both objective and essay components, while others contained only the essay. For the essay alone, time limitations varied from forty-five minutes for one essay response to two hours for two essays.

The Subjects

Of the several hundred secondary school participants, 32% were identified as college preparatory. Most of these students were enrolled in college preparatory curricula or courses (including honors and advanced placement sections), but a small minority, approximately 10%, were self-identified as college preparatory. At the time of testing, 12% of the overall study population had completed the baccalaureate and were attempting to gain admission into either graduate or professional schools.

The Method

Scoring criteria were applied systematically on two fronts. On the one hand, each rating session was controlled by a rigorous scoring guide, marking scoring categories with well-developed descriptions of specific competency categories. Superior or strong papers were typically described as "perceptive and thoughtful . . . well-organized, detailed, and syntactically mature" or "well-handled, responsive, displaying skill in sentence construction and variety."

On the other hand, a second set of scoring criteria considered standards of rhetorical difficulty in relation to the proficiency standard required by the academic level (lower division, upper division, and the post-baccalaureate). The standards of rhetorical difficulty entailed four categories—ranging from the lowest rhetorical expectations (description and narration), to developing an assertion with appropriate illustrations (exemplification, division and classification, cause-effect, identification), to explaining another's assertion and providing a critical reaction to it (judgmental and process analysis), to stating an independently developed thesis and supporting that assertion via external sources (deductive and inductive argumentation and definition).

In all scoring circumstances, attention was directed to sentence construction (variety, maturity, structural complexity, length), paragraph development (use of discourse levels), and essay organization (logic, coherence, unity, transition).

The Results

Taking the results of all tests together, we concluded that a significant proportion of the upper-level secondary writers were equal to the challenge of performing at acceptable or passing levels on college writing proficiency tests.

After ten years of investigation and analysis, the results show that the best secondary writers are as proficient in writing—at least as measured by holistically-scored college entry and exit-level instruments—as the best college writers, though a smaller percentage of the former equated favorably with the latter. Almost 40% of secondary college preparatory students write as well as or better than college writers attempting to meet upper-division writing proficiency standards, graduation certification standards, or professional/graduate school admissions requirements. Eventually, the better secondary writers, specifically those within the 40% noted above, number significantly among the top 30% of all students taking the baccalaureate degree at a California State University campus.

A random sample of papers from all student-writer populations was reviewed to determine the degree to which individuals in each group exhibited writing characteristics frequently observed in the top half of all college writers. Again, secondary writers performed admirably and well within the percentage norms established on holistic essay performance. Variances in all categories were either minimal or negligible, and with the exceptions of sentence length and complexity, secondary writers compared quite favorably with all groups of college writers. If secondary writers were adjudged weaker than their college counterparts in any particular areas, vocabulary sophistication, use of effective examples, and grasp of topical allusions or references would have exhausted the tally. In all other instances, as measured by any index or standard, secondary writers fared exceptionally well—at least in terms of certain negative presumptions, expectations, or premises often harbored by college instructors or directors of college writing programs.

Additionally, secondary students at the upper levels of writing proficiency, who otherwise qualified for a California State University exemption from freshman composition requirements, as a group take more college writing courses or humanities courses with strong writing components than their peers who score at lower levels on the holistic proficiency index. In any event, what was once a major point of contention—that exempted students would take fewer courses in English or the humanities—has now been rendered groundless.

Implications

No one suggests that these scant data are representative of full and final measures of writing competency that might be applied in a well-designed and rigorous writing course. Yet, in a context where the short-term competencies of writers can be shown, even if under strictures of time and pressure, the results are both astounding and promising.

Few would have been convinced of the inherent strength in secondary writing programs or the innate promise among 11th and 12th grade writers.

A most telling issue concerns the literacy connection as it affects secondary and college departments of English. Can we afford to coexist in splendid isolation, refusing to acknowledge each other's problems and programs, remedies and responses? Must we continue to ignore the best interests of those students who would most benefit from academic cooperation? An in-depth understanding of the specifics related to curriculum—course content, student population (including demographics), teaching environment, availability of texts and other teaching materials, political and community implications, budget restrictions, administrative leadership, and the like—would certainly lead to productive cooperation and the implementation of mutually

beneficial ventures. But how can we initiate such an understanding?

1. Should faculty exchange programs be initiated or expanded? Might joint programs be feasible, especially in those areas which most directly touch the interests of college-bound students—writing programs, testing, placement, and general education requirements?
2. Failing that, would school districts and colleges be willing to underwrite a "consultant-in-residence" program, one allowing faculty from each institution to teach, observe, and consult with the other on a part-time temporary basis? And there is no reason why the "consultant" should not be someone from the secondary school, serving "in residence" at the college.

Conclusion

Maintaining unwarranted premises regarding the abilities of college preparatory student writers, as they move to the college experience, is very likely one of the single most destructive attitudes preventing the cultivation of common interests, common bonds, and common sense. Instead, the two segments of the academic community, sharing an interest in secondary students at the most critical stage of their young adult lives, should engage in dialogue focusing on writing proficiency, general literacy, and articulation, transcending bias, provincialism, arrogance, and apathy. The bond between college and secondary departments of English is too important not to be nurtured.

WRITING TOGETHER

by Mary Jane Reed
Solon High School, Ohio

One way in which school systems help teachers learn a unified approach to the teaching of writing is by providing release time to attend inservice programs on the writing process. Last year, every English and language arts teacher in our school was given the opportunity to participate in a series of sessions conducted by teachers trained in the National Writing Project, a movement which, with its two basic premises, has cut through the quagmire of how to teach writing. The first premise is that, in order to teach writing, every teacher must write. This means writing while students write, as well as writing for publication. The second premise is that writing is a process: it is not a "one-shot deal."

These workshops not only provided teachers with a way to teach writing more effectively, but, more importantly, they shared ways for teachers to improve their own writing abilities. Each six-hour workshop began by asking teachers to respond to the writing topic: "How did you learn?" This self-searching exercise produced revealing insights. Most said they learned to write by doing. They did not remember having guidelines; they did not remember having mentors who led the way. One teacher wrote that he never knew what an "essay" was until he got to college. Another wrote that he never understood why his papers were always "B's". He understood the teacher's comments but not how to implement change.

Realizing the need to show students how to approach a writing assignment and how to revise, teachers were introduced to techniques to use during the writing process—different strategies for different stages: brainstorming, rough draft(s), final copy.

To dispel the "I know what to say but I can't get it down on paper" syndrome, writers were encouraged to randomly jot down all the responses they had to a given topic. At this stage, they were not to be shackled by concern for spelling, grammar, or continuity. Paradoxically, when writers strove for perfection at the outset, their writing was inhibited. Teachers saw that writers cannot mentally process all the steps of writing at once.

The next strategy taught was called "clustering," where the relationship between some ideas emerges and others are eliminated. Then the agony began—banging out the rough draft. Our English and language arts teachers learned how important it is for students to realize that writing is hell for everyone. It is for Neil Simon, it was for Dylan Thomas, and it will be for students and teachers alike. Although students have traditionally "tossed out" their drafts because they are messy, students (and their teachers) need to see the drafts as being an important part of writing. Rough drafts transform ugly segments of thought into meaningful communication.

These first stages of writing actually reveal thinking in progress. They teach writers how to improve and see the progression in the development of their thoughts. Too often students think revising is simply correcting spelling. Teachers can intervene at this point and review rough drafts with students to teach them how to revise and how to support a thesis. The result is a final draft that is better. This improvement spawns a more positive attitude towards writing, which, in turn, produces better writing. A wonderful cycle begins.

As teachers revamp their thinking, realizing that writing is not solely for analyzing literature, students as writers will begin to wear many hats: taking class notes, writing paragraphs and essays, sending letters, and exploring thoughts in their journals. Journal writing, in fact, is an excellent way to generate enthusiasm for writing because students are not at risk. Journals are not graded. One teacher in our workshops, who occasionally allows ten minutes or so of class time for journal writing, said that when he asks students to put their journals away to resume their discussion of literature, they beg him for "just a few more minutes." Students *begging* to write?

Hopefully, if students write daily, writing will become an extension of themselves. If they do not actually come to love to write, then at the very least they will not hate it.

To further develop a positive attitude toward writing, students need the opportunity to talk about writing. This can be done in peer-editing groups where their writing is shared with others. When teachers in our workshops were asked to write a descriptive paragraph and then break into groups, they admitted that they felt as they imagined their students felt at first—apprehensive and nervous. Yet, as they began to discuss their writing, their enthusiasm swelled. One teacher said to another, "I've worked next to you for ten years and never knew you could write this well!"

One of the greatest benefits of these workshops was a reawakening within the teachers of their own potential as writers. At the end of several sessions, many had the beginnings of picture-book stories they could read to their first graders. One writer had the start of a humorous article on a twenty-pound swan and another on the anguish of having his passport confiscated in the Soviet Union. Still another writer confessed, "I haven't done any serious writing for years. This [approach] opens a whole new world for me."

Yet no writing program can be successful without an enlightened administration and supportive school board. In our school system, the administrators attended the Writing Project workshops, and the school board and public were informed of the program through public meetings and articles sent to every home in the community. Commitment was the key to releasing teachers for workshops, developing writing centers, and allowing high school English teachers to teach no more than four classes. Of

course, this program is costly, but the results are worth the investment. Imagine the strength of a program where everyone is writing together: the students are all practicing writing as a process and the teachers themselves are writing.

CANDIDATES FOR MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

DENNIS L. BECKMANN, Teacher, Journalism coordinator, Omaha Bryan Senior High School, Nebraska. **Offices**: OEA Public Relations, Metro Track Executive Board. **Member**: NCTE, CSSEDC, OEA, NSEA, NEA, PDK, NCA, NECA. **Publications**: Poetry selections in Nebraska Writers Workshop Journal. **Awards**: 29 journalism awards, nominated for Omaha Teacher of the Year. **Program Participant**: 1988, Omaha Public Schools Fall Conference; 1986–88, NCTE; 1988, CSSEDC; 1988–89, Facilitator for DWP (Discipline With Purpose).

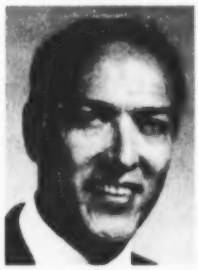
Position Statement: Leadership is by example, not by title. So often we see supervisors, teachers, counselors, puff up their chests and pull rank. It's time we lead by production, instruction, and sharing so that each of our peers and subordinates may grow professionally and personally. Department leaders must empower each of their associates. The strength of the department has direct correlation to the leaders' ability to encourage independence and responsibility and to engender expertise and confidence. It's a two-way street: we must be the authority but be ready to delegate authority; we must coordinate but be willing to accept organizational precepts from our teachers; we must encourage departmental growth but not at the expense of individual growth. To lead is to share.

PAUL C. BELLIN, Humanities Coordinator, Weld County School District 6, Greeley, Colorado. **Offices**: Currently: Director of Conferences, Colorado Language Arts Society; CEE Commission on Supervision and Curriculum Development in the Language Arts. Formerly: President of CLAS, chair, long-range planning, chair, competency testing committee, V.P., local chapter of PDK. **Member**: CLAS, NCTE, Colorado Council & Weld County Council-IRA, ALAN, PDK, ASCD. **Publications**: Coauthor, position paper on staff development, Colorado ASCD; essay in *Signal*, publication of IRA. **Program Participant**: 1988, CSSEDC, CLAS, IRA Regional Conference, NCTE Spring Conference, Colorado Council IRA, University of Northern Colorado Reading Conference, Interdisciplinary Learning Conference, Colorado Department of Education.

Position Statement: Many schools and districts do not recognize the importance of the department chairperson. Hence, chairpersons in those places fulfill their obligations without the incentives of time and money. CSSEDC supports chairpersons through its publications, its meetings, and some informal networking. I propose that CSSEDC extend its support by establishing a formal network that will provide counsel and information to chairpersons. I further propose that CSSEDC aggressively promote the department chair position with school and district administrators.

SUSAN BENJAMIN, English Department Chairperson, Highland Park High School, Illinois. **Member**: IATE, NCTE, CSSEDC, ASCD, IASCD, Phi Delta Kappa. **Publications**: Articles in *CSSEDC Quarterly*, 1987 and 1988, in *Illinois Speech Journal*, 1974. **Awards**: Township District 113 Superintendent's Recognition Awards, Honorary Thespian, Maine Township. **Program Participant**: 1987–88 IATE, 1987–89 NCTE, 1987–89 CSSEDC.

Position Statement: Empowerment is more than a current educational buzzword. As leaders of English departments, we need to be empowered to promote in others their best teaching and learning. Through working collaboratively in CSSEDC, we can facilitate strong and effective leadership to motivate, inspire and empower our colleagues and students.



THOMAS R. FISCHER, English Department Chairperson, Community High School District #94, West Chicago, Illinois. **Offices**: Chairperson, Publicity Committee, IATE-1984, Associate Program Chair, CSSEDC St. Louis-1988, Program Chair, CSSEDC Baltimore-1989. **Member**: NCTE, CSSEDC, IATE, Phi Delta Kappa. **Publications**: Articles in *CSSEDC Quarterly* and the *Texas English Journal;* Reviews in the Lynchburg *News* and the *National Catholic Conference Newsletter;* Editor of Campbell County *School Notes*. **Awards**: 3 NEH Grants, Grant from the Council for Basic Education, Grant from the Fulbright-Hays Foundation for Foreign Study, Fellowships at Wesleyan University and The University of Virginia. **Program Participant**: NCTE, CSSEDC.

Position Statement: I find the role of teacher/chairperson rewarding and exciting. Its challenges enable me to grow professionally and the variety demands that I keep pace with society's educational needs. Working with students keeps me mentally alert as I try to understand their educational needs. Working with teachers allows me to learn from them as they learn from me. I improve within my own classroom as I observe the wonderful ways they teach within theirs. Sharing ideas with them when developing curriculum also broadens my horizons as I try to broaden theirs. CSSEDC has enabled me to learn, and has supported my growth, as a department chair. I continue to benefit because of the warmth of friendship and the support of peers in our ever-changing profession. I have found this especially true in my role as Program Chair for the 1989 CSSEDC Workshop in Baltimore. As a Member-at-Large, I want to give back to this organization some measure of what I have been receiving.

MARY PAULINE McELROY, English Coordinator for Cypress- Fairbanks Independent School District & Director of Instruction for Jersey Village High School. **Offices**: Texas Joint Council of Teachers of English, Corresponding Secretary, 1979–80, Chair, Nominating Committee, 1983–84; Houston Area Council of Teachers of English, Recording Secretary, 1978–79, Parliamentarian, 1979–80. **Member**: CSSEDC, NCTE. **Publications**: "The Detective Story," *Exercise Exchange*, 1981; "The Teaching of

Writing: Is the Public Finally Ready to Support It?", *English in Texas*, 1981; Consultant for American Literature for *Living Literature Series* (Grades 6–12), edited by Guth, Hans P., 1981; "A Proposed Program of Professional Development for Middle School English/Language Arts Teachers," *English in Texas*, 1980; "The Papers Stop Here," *Hawaii Council of Teachers of English Leaflet*, 1980; "Review of Selected Scope Activity Kits," *English Journal*, 1977. **Awards**: The Friends of Jersey Village Drama Award, The Friends of Art Award (state level). **Program Participant**: NCTE and CSSEDC, 1978–present.

Position Statement: I would consider it a professional honor to serve on the Board of CSSEDC. This is the organization that has provided the specific support, assistance, and growth to me in my role as a supervisor of English. I would appreciate the opportunity to actively plan and work for CSSEDC to in some small measure repay the help it has given me.

BALLOT INSTRUCTIONS:

The CSSEDC Bylaws permit members to vote either by mail or at the CSSEDC business session of the annual fall conference. Each member mailing a ballot should mark it and mail it in an envelope with a return name and address to: Willa Mae Kippes, P.O. Box 302, 401 12th Street, Gilcrest, Colorado 80623.

Ballots must be postmarked no later than November 8, 1989. Members who prefer voting at the conference will be given a ballot and an envelope at the business session of CSSEDC. Institutions may designate ONE individual as the one person permitted to vote. Please list the institution name and address on the envelope.

CSSEDC BALLOT—1989

Members-at-Large: Vote for Two

_____ DENNIS L. BECKMANN
_____ PAUL C. BELLIN
_____ SUSAN BENJAMIN
_____ THOMAS R. FISCHER
_____ MARY PAULINE McELROY

_____ _____ _____

(Write-in Candidate)

CALLS FOR MANUSCRIPTS— PLANS FOR FUTURE ISSUES

The *CSSEDC Quarterly*, a publication of the Conference for Secondary School English Department Chairpersons of NCTE, seeks articles of 250–3,000 words on topics of interest to English department leaders. Informal, firsthand accounts of successful department activities are encouraged.

Recent surveys of our readers reveal these topics of interest: leadership training for the new department chair, class size/class load, support from the business community, censorship issues, problems for rural schools, reading/writing centers, and whole language curriculum. Short articles on these and other concerns are published in every issue. In addition, upcoming issues will have these themes:

February 1990 (November 1 deadline):
Student Teacher Training Programs

May 1990 (February 1 deadline):
Supervision/Observation/Evaluation

October 1990 (July 1 deadline):
Seniors: Innovative Ideas for the Fourth Year

December 1990 (September 15 deadline):
Effective Leadership

Manuscripts may be sent on 5.25- or 3.5-inch floppy disks, with IBM compatible ASCII files or as traditional double-spaced typed copy.

Address articles and inquiries to: James Strickland, Editor, CSSEDC Quarterly, English Department, Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania, 16057-1326.

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CSSEDC Quarterly

Conference for Secondary School English Department Chairpersons

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In This Issue

Research in the Classroom: Teacher-Research

by James Strickland, editor

If we look around our department, we notice that some of the people we work with teach because it's their job, folks already counting down years to retirement; others teach because they enjoy what they are doing. It's fun, they say; at least it's good training for stand-up comedy, as a former English teacher turned female comic tells me. Another group can be delineated: those who teach because they want to learn. Teacher-researchers are both classroom instructors and learning investigators who are interested in knowledge. They are scholars as much as Miltonists or Derrida critics are.

When we become teacher-researchers, we engage in what Yetta Goodman calls "kid-watching," though when speaking with administrators and school boards, we would be better to refer to it as "ethnography" or "qualitative research." No matter what we call it, teacher-research means not only teaching the subject matter dictated by the syllabus, but being equally interested in how students learn—watching, recording, analyzing, and reporting. The most important finding is the one that Pat Hartwell reports: teacher-research changes the way we teach. We become better in the act of paying attention to the details.

The first article in this issue is by Collin "Terry" Wansor, chairperson of the English department of Hempfield Area Senior High School in Greensburg, Pennsylvania. Terry illustrates the importance of the role of teacher-researcher, describing a research project that he and his colleagues undertook, a project undertaken in addition to his present dissertation work in Rhetoric and Linguistics at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Terry exhorts the members of his department and classroom teachers in general to consider qualitative research as a way of learning more about themselves and their classrooms.

The second article is written by Gloria Neubert, the Coordinator of English Education and the Research Director of the Maryland Writing Project at Towson State University. A former junior high school English teacher, Gloria's areas of specialization include faculty development, classroom research, and reading and writing instruction. Gloria offers a half-dozen suggestions gleaned from her own experience for ways to spark interest in classroom research within the department.

In the third article, Carole Bertisch, a teacher-researcher, describes the research she conducted in a larger classroom—the entire writing program of the Katonah-Lewisboro School District in Westchester County, New York. Her article points to the importance of administrative support for the success of any new program, in this case locating that support in the assistant superintendent in charge of curriculum and personnel at Katonah-Lewisboro, Bob Lichtenfeld. He, in turn, gives credit for the success of the program to the Writing Coordinator, Mary Winsky, a teacher he remembered and respected from their earlier days at John Jay Junior High School, where he was then principal and she was, in his words, "an exceptional classroom teacher."

Melanie Sperling, the Director of Research Applications at the Center for the Study of Writing, authors the fourth article, describing some of the various activities that teacher-researchers have been engaged in at the Center, the Bay Area Writing Project, and the University of California, Berkeley. In fact, not only is teacher-research an ongoing interest of the Center, it was also the focus of the April 1989 issue of *The Quarterly*, the journal Melanie edits, a publication of the National Writing Project and the Center for the Study of Writing. Teacher-research confers an empowerment from within—teachers who actively study the way their students learn and who reflect upon the levels of learning in their classrooms have a sense of themselves and who they are, an understanding that needs no confirmation from outside or above.

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RESEARCH IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM: TAKING A FIRST STEP

by Collin T. Wansor
Hempfield Area Senior High School, Greensburg, Pennsylvania

Over the last few years, I've been doing research on my own, and I have encouraged colleagues to do the same—a very special kind of research that is generally called qualitative research, a kind that is empirical but not governed by many of the methodologies and mathematical/statistical "proof" systems of quantitative research.

Our Own Research Question

While the subject of our research might not interest everyone else, my colleagues and I have learned a great deal about how we do our jobs. We have learned about how we operate as respondents to students' writing, using some fairly simple research techniques enriched by a good deal of trust and mutual respect. We have gained some insights into how we go about writing comments on students' papers and what kinds of personalities we project as we do so.

To do our research, we exchanged sets of our students' papers that we had read and commented upon previously. We then analyzed each other's marking tendencies in terms of the emotional tenor of the commentary, frequency of comment, focus and intent in comment, making some final inferences about the "voice" or "persona" we saw at work in the commentary. The results were recorded easily on charts devised with columns for recording coded symbols corresponding to the various categories of information. Following this, we returned the sets of papers to each other, withholding the charts until each person completed one for him- or herself (there were three of us). The self-made charts were then compared with the peer-made charts, and the differences in perceptions and coding led to some lively discussions, marked by significant growth in self-awareness. All three of us agreed that we learned something about ourselves as readers and responders to students' writing—we never realized how negative we tended to be or how impersonal much of our commentary was. All of us enjoy teaching and care for our students, but not many of those strong feelings came through in what we wrote on our students' papers. But this is not my point.

Taking Time to Be Researchers

My point is that three fellow classroom teachers were willing to take a little time (the whole project consumed about six hours or so) to be curious about a facet of their teaching (their "commenting" styles) and to devise a fairly simple method to conduct research about it.

The sheer volume of research published over the last twenty years (as well as the proliferation of its specialized jargon) scares off many an English teacher from serious consideration of doing "research." It all gets to seeming so scientific, with varimax rotations, multivariate analyses, regressions, progressions, chi-factors, t-tests, Chronbach's Alpha, and the Pearson's product-moment correlation. (Some of us old-timers get the willies, and I don't mean Shakespeare.) Yet we teachers who have been practicing professionals for twenty years or more often have the most to offer to the growing field of professional studies and knowledge. My colleagues and I never had in mind to make an enormously significant contribution to the scholarship of our field. All we wanted to do was learn something about ourselves. And through our "commenting"-styles research project, we all did. That, I think, is the important first step that many English teachers should take if they want to do some research in the classroom.

Whether teachers use coding and recording systems, survey forms, questionnaires, informal conversations, or audio/video tapes, they can conduct valuable research on what, to me, is the most important variable in the classroom environment, the teachers themselves. For the kind of research I have in mind for English teachers, the research attitude is perhaps more important than the research methodology. Consciousness-raising and self-awareness are vital first steps toward self-improvement, a very critical outcome of research. More experienced teachers can, and should, be doing research in the classroom, their own classrooms.

Role of the Chairperson

The department chairperson plays an important role in fostering research attitudes among the department members; the chairperson must be a learner and a researcher to begin with. Clearly the role requires us to model teacher-research, initiating research by asking questions at department meetings. A simple question like "Are our students writing better at the end of a school year than they were at the beginning?" serves as a good working example, or a question such as "How do my students interpret and react to comments I've written on their papers?" might excite some research projects.

Department chairpersons could also provide recently published books to establish a professional library within the department for the staff; such books might include *The Teacher-Researcher: How to Study Writing in the Classroom* by Miles Myers (NCTE, 1985) or *Reclaiming the Classroom: Teacher Research as an Agency for Change* by Dixie Goswami and Peter Stillman (Boynton/Cook, 1987).

Whatever we as educational leaders can do, we should. Teachers are too valuable a resource and research too useful a tool to be allowed to exist apart.

DEVELOPING INTEREST IN CLASSROOM RESEARCH

by Gloria A. Neubert
Towson State University, Maryland

I train teacher-researchers. For the past five years, I have conducted teacher-research institutes for classroom teachers interested in pursuing naturalistic inquiry within their own classes. The purpose of these institutes is to teach the research process: how to identify a research curiosity, frame that curiosity in the form of a central research question, select appropriate data—student papers, interviews, observations recorded as field notes—analyze the data in order to identify valid patterns, interpret the data in light of instruction and theory, and publish the research in a variety of forms.

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The participants, most of them English teachers, are highly motivated. Near the end of the year-long institute, the teachers recognize that teacher-research has added a new dimension to their professionalism and has benefited their students' learning. They look forward to sharing this excitement with colleagues in their own schools. They begin thinking about how they can encourage other members of their departments to do classroom research.

English department chairpersons are in a strategic position to encourage more teachers to participate in teacher-research. As a trainer of teacher-researchers, I would offer department chairs six activities to develop awareness of teacher-research as a concept and to interest more English teachers in engaging in teacher-research.

Motivational Testimony

If you are fortunate enough to have a member of your department engaged in teacher-research, ask the teacher to share his or her current research with others in the department, either at a department meeting or informally over lunch. If teacher-research has not yet taken off in your department, invite a credible teacher-researcher from another school to talk about his or her current study at one of your department meetings. Local writing projects, affiliated with the National Writing Project, can usually suggest a teacher-researcher to contact. Afterwards, talk about the benefits of such inquiry. Excitement over classroom research is contagious and personal testimony can motivate others in the department.

Reading Suggestions

Suggest that one or more department members read *Reclaiming the Classroom: Teacher-Research as an Agency for Change*, edited by Dixie Goswami and Peter Stillman (Boynton/Cook, 1987), and *Seeing for Ourselves: Case-Study Research by Teachers of Writing*, edited by Glenda Bissex and Richard Bullock (Heinemann, 1987). Ask those who read the books to present an overview of them during a department meeting. These books are quite convincing because they are authored by classroom teachers. Both books clarify what teacher-research is, demythologizing what Janet Emig calls a "conceptual synecdoche"—the belief that all research requires experimental groups, control groups, and tests of significant difference. Both books point out the benefits of classroom inquiry to teacher empowerment, student achievement, and the knowledge base concerning teaching English. Finally, both books include excellent research summaries written by teacher-researchers, enabling teachers to understand classroom inquiry through concrete examples of research conducted by teachers in classrooms that resemble their own.

Research Logs

Ask your teachers to keep research logs. In their logs they should write about successes or problems they are experiencing with their classes. At a department meeting, share these logs. Have the department as a group write these experiences as research questions. For example, one teacher wrote in her research log about a student with a speech impediment. Because the student wrote words the way he said them, his readers experienced great difficulty understanding his message. The teacher's research question for this problem became, "How can Jessie develop fluency in his writing in spite of his speech difficulties?" Another teacher, after writing in his log about the success he was sensing with a reader-response approach, framed the research question, "What happens to the attitude of students about reading when reader-response is used in English class?"

A similar approach is to ask each member of the English department to keep a record of "critical incidents"—striking events or comments made by students. For example, after participating in a mini-lesson involving graphic organizers for comparison and contrast, a student, whose writing is usually disorganized, turns in a composition that is quite orderly. Or, students complain about the required novel introduced for a thematic unit. During a department meeting, share these critical incidents, then let the teachers turn each incident into a research question. For the two critical incidents cited above, the questions might be: "Can below-average, middle school students be taught to use graphic organizers independently in order to help the organization of their writing?" and "What happens to the negative attitudes of students about a required novel when they are paired with a friend to communicate about the novel via journals?"

These activities—writing about successes/problems or critical incidents, then turning the experiences into potential research questions—help teachers understand what classroom research is and the direct benefits it can have for their students' learning.

Professional Development Day

Suggest that the local school system or district devote a professional study day to the topic of classroom research. Bring all the English teachers in the system together to spend a day developing awareness of naturalistic inquiry. The day should include some convincing presentations made by classroom teachers currently involved in research. Be sure the day ends with some direction for those who wish to learn more and who will need a support system as they begin their own research.

Conference Funding

Provide funds for teachers to attend a national, regional, or local conference which will have sessions devoted to teacher-research. For example, all NCTE conferences have such sessions, as well as the annual CSSEDC conference, the International Reading Association, and many local university conferences. Make two conditions for this funding: (1) teachers must attend sessions devoted to teacher-research; and (2) teachers must report at a department meeting what they learned about teacher-research.

Role Model

Be a role model for your department members. Become a teacher-researcher yourself! Let members of your department hear you ponder research questions, watch you collect and analyze data, effuse as you discover patterns. Seeing you energized about your teaching may just be the most convincing way to interest other English teachers in classroom research.

A RESEARCHER OBSERVES A WRITING AND READING COMMUNITY

by Carole Ackerson Bertisch
Rye Neck Middle and High School

While on sabbatical, I was privileged to be chosen as a participant in a classroom researcher grant at the New York City Writing Project at Lehman College. As a classroom researcher, my goals included planning a writing program to be implemented in my school district when I returned. The primary benefit of such a program would be for the students, but I wanted to develop one that would add new dimensions to my life as writing coordinator and to the lives of teachers and administrators in my district as well.

The Writing Program

I began my research by visiting a writing program in its fourth year of existence. Faculty members advised me to interview the assistant superintendent since it was he who created a half-time writing coordinator's position and invited the program's original twelve teachers (two from each of four elementary schools, two each from the junior and senior high schools) to participate in a graduate-level course in the writing process four years earlier. He also structured time for the writing coordinator to research writing programs in nine urban and suburban school districts, from New York City to Westport, Connecticut, so she could then share what she learned with the twelve trained teachers, working with them individually in their classrooms each week.

During the second year, the writing coordinator, now full-time, began teaching the writing workshop for teachers and monthly network meetings as another support system for the teachers.

We also decided that we would make the program voluntary, not mandate any particular program. Graduate course credit was a tremendous incentive to the group. According to the assistant superintendent, "The key to our success is that the writing coordinator is incredibly sensitive to the needs of teachers and knows how to deal with people in instituting change. She represents a nonthreatening, collegial support system."

Professional Growth

Because more than 72 people have been trained now (12 the first year, 20 each year after), the writing coordinator has had to alter her schedule. She is in each of the schools one day and then takes a seventh day to catch up on paperwork, correspondence, and appointments. One of the things that is impressive is that the writing coordinator has kept her former students from the graduate course in the monthly network. She calls them "the alumni group," has a dinner for them every year at her home, and puts out a publication of their writing.

The assistant superintendent's support for the program continues. He supports the program financially with proposals to the Board of Education that participants receive pay for attending network meetings and that staff members be reimbursed for attending workshops and courses outside of the school district, such as at Teachers College, Bard College, and Martha's Vineyard. He explained that, "One of the greatest impacts of the writing coordinator and her position has not only been in writing but on professional growth and development. During the past four years, we have had an explosion of teachers involved in professional activities in this district. Four years ago, we had a total of 75 professional-growth activities that teachers in the system were doing. This year we had 325 with 225 teachers. These are courses, conferences, and workshops—all of which we pay for. We budget every summer for two people to go to Martha's Vineyard for the writing program. This year we are going to build in a regular travel budget for the writing coordinator as well. I think one of the things you may find in the district is that we really do treat each other as professionals. The only issue we really have not come to grips with," the assistant superintendent said, "is dealing with those teachers who are not interested in the writing process. The difficulties are more evident at the elementary level because a majority of teachers are involved; at the secondary level teachers have different mind-sets about their responsibilities for teaching writing."

For the future, the assistant superintendent and the writing coordinator have discussed the possibility of offering short workshops, two to three sessions, on specific topics in writing that would be geared to the secondary level. The goal would be to encourage teachers to feel comfortable in examining their own writing and the writing of their students in every subject area.

Administrative Support

As we spoke, I realized how important the assistant superintendent is to the continuing success of the writing program. His support has been crucial at every level, yet he generously gives the writing coordinator the credit. When I developed a chart to view graphically the parts that contributed to the whole program, the assistant superintendent dominated the top third of the chart as the originator and facilitator of district policy, especially its financial commitment. The writing coordinator as the coordinator reached out on the chart in a sunburst of lines to each of the schools through her visits, workshops, and communications.

My theory, when I began my research, was that a strong support system for the teachers would be essential to continue an effective program. By the time I interviewed the assistant superintendent, I had counted and documented 26 different levels of support in the district. These covered an array that went from faculty meetings, to student visits to other districts, to a Friday night pizza dinner to plan for future changes.

When I commented to the assistant superintendent that the district had made a considerable investment, he answered, "We are talking about writing, a terribly important subject, and it cuts across all lines. In the original group we even had a member of the Board of Education who participated."

Faculty Benefits

Two of the benefits that he sees to the faculty are, first, that when the writing coordinator spends the day in the elementary schools, the teachers who meet for morning coffee sit and discuss teaching strategies, an opportunity they never had before.

"The other benefit," he said, "is the openness to having other people come into the classroom. I am constantly being invited to just drop in on classes. The last time that I went to an elementary classroom, I walked out with ten book reports that the kids wanted me to read. They did not really know who I was—they were just so anxious to share! As I go from school to school in the district, I see how kids are much more enthusiastic and willing to write, read to others, and enjoy writing."

Planning and Assessment

We discussed the possibilities of formal evaluation of the writing program, and the assistant superintendent pointed out that until a student has experienced the writing process from kindergarten through twelfth grade, there would be no way to fully test the effects.

He said, "Our scores have not been adversely affected, even though there has been a deemphasis on the amount of time spent on formal grammar, punctuation, etc. But now there is a richness, a willingness to share, a love to write. I have to believe that that results in better writing."

The pattern that I see emerging is that each year there has been an effort to recharge the teachers in some new way, to keep the writing process vital. While I observed in March, April, and May, many changes took place in the program. During this short time, the writing coordinator started three new groups—a workshop for ninth- and tenth-grade social studies teachers (at the request of the social studies instructional leader); a three-session writing and thinking workshop for 14 teachers (in conjunction with the gifted-and-talented coordinator); and a new writing course scheduled for the fall which she planned to teach with the high school principal. As I interviewed other people, I learned that morning coffees and

writing groups to share personal writing were also new this school year.

The Writing Coordinator at Work

Curious about how she scheduled her time in the schools, I asked her to describe a typical day. "This morning, for example, we met for coffee at the elementary school at 8:15 a.m. Whoever wants to meet comes and we talk about books, mini-lessons, or what teachers are doing in their classrooms, for about a half hour. Then I go into the classrooms. What I do depends on what the teacher wants. In the first grade I read a new Charlotte Zolotow book and compared it to other books of hers that they had read. Then they went into writing workshop and I went around conferring with kids we wanted to target. I just take notes and write to the teacher as we're doing it. Then I went to a third grade where there was a little girl who had been stuck. I got her out of where she was and started conferring with three boys. In the fourth-grade class a boy was writing a story about Japan, so I went out to my car, got him a map of Japan, and we xeroxed it."

She begins going into classrooms to give support after teachers complete the 30-hour course. At that time, they are also invited to the monthly network meetings. A core group of about 20 always attend, joined by others who are available. During the time I observed, the number varied from 21 to 38. At one point, the writing coordinator planned to say, "If you do not come to the network, I will not come to your class. I feel that way in my belief system, but in practice, I do not know. One man does not have time to come to the network. He is taking a thinking skills course, and he is our union representative. If I stop going to his class—he is not that committed yet—the writing might stop in his second grade."

I express my regret that I had not been able to observe the graduate-level course, to see teachers from different grade levels and disciplines reading and writing together, because it ended before I began my research. She explains that the course is structured like a writing workshop, except that the reading is different for grade levels. The elementary teachers read *The Art of Teaching Writing* by Lucy Calkins, middle school English teachers read *In the Middle* by Nancie Atwell, high school English teachers read *Clearing the Way* by Tom Romano, and secondary teachers from other subject areas read *The Journal Book* by Toby Fulwiler.

She explained how the structure differed in the junior and senior high school. "I go into classrooms but I also meet on a weekly basis with the high school principal, who took the writing course last year. We plan faculty meetings like writing workshops." For example, in one meeting, the principal had the teachers write in response to changes planned by the reorganization committee and then the teachers met in small groups to brainstorm their dreams for the high school. He used suggestions developed by the faculty in his presentation to the Board of Education. This was a departure from the standard faculty meetings of my experience.

What surprised me was that the writing coordinator expected every teacher and every administrator to use the writing program differently. In a senior creative writing class we wrote and read aloud with the students, and afterward she suggested that the teacher edit only the first page of long autobiographies with the students, model it for them, and have them edit independently. During another period we wrote with the assistant principal and shared our writing. After a conference with the principal, we went into a health class where the teacher proudly showed us the results of focused freewriting the students had done about attitudes toward drugs. Each experience was unique.

For the future she is planning to train from within, to have presentations by others at the writing workshops. Several teachers have been celebrated outside the district for their work in writing by receiving research grants, consulting in other districts, teaching at universities, and doing workshops at professional meetings.

Testimony from Participants

Although my official research is finished, I recall some of the voices speaking about the writing program. From seventh graders I observed and surveyed in a writing workshop:

"The other kids or the teacher push me along when I am stuck."

"It helps me express my feelings in writing more openly than in the past."

"It lets me write and use my imagination to come up with ideas."

From twelfth graders in a writing class:

"We have become closer than most classes allow, and can bare our feelings."

"There is openness and availability of criticism."

"Journal writing can help me dig deeper and deeper and find myself."

From a social studies teacher, in a paper she wrote:

"After all those years as a teacher nurturing and taking care of kids, I am being nurtured. Thursdays I am replenished. The writing coordinator helps me take my blinders off and allows me to see the miracles presenting themselves in the classroom."

From a home economics teacher:

"We receive the sun rays of the support group and we all grow like plants. You do not have to produce the light—the light just goes through the writing coordinator to us."

From the writing coordinator, in her journal to me:

"This job is hard because it is always tentative, always beholding, never comfortable. Or too comfortable, depending on the building, the day, the teachers, administrators, and students involved."

From a sixth-grade teacher:

"I always considered my strengths to be in math and science, but now I feel my greatest strength is in writing. It changed the threads of my teaching—it unifies everything."

From a member of the Board of Education who attended the first sessions of the writing program:

"I remember the energy level of the teachers participating, learning and working. It was the sheer excitement that I felt, the excitement of learning something new. The greatest benefit of the program is the respect for what others are doing. The student eagerness to share and appreciate what others have done carries into other areas. The willingness to share will emanate from the classroom and provide dividends for the rest of the students' lives."

Conclusions

The network meetings that I attended were like bookends for my observations of the writing program—balancing and containing my experiences between them. I think to myself, the word *network* is a metaphor for the image I feel all these professionals weaving together. They send out criss-crossing lines about their feelings and thoughts, forming a pattern that unites the group, a tone of warmth and sharing. Could I create a caring community like this? I observed the program after the early glitches were gone, and it

was accepted enthusiastically. As I thought about the program I will start in the fall, I knew that I would have to start slowly, find out what teachers needed, ask for volunteers. My district is smaller. Their needs are different. Teachers need specific learning experiences that they can transfer to their own classrooms.

After fifteen years of teaching, I am convinced that the success of a new program depends on three elements: teachers must feel the need for the program; staff development must be provided, for credit or pay; and a continuing support system for the staff must be planned to keep the program effective. These are the seeds, the soil, and the nourishment for a flourishing program. I realize that I have seen a vital support system in action and know it is possible to achieve.

PROJECTS SUPPORT TEACHER RESEARCH

by Melanie Sperling
Center for the Study of Writing

In the field of writing, the phenomenon of teacher-research has grown in the last few years as teachers reflect upon their own classrooms and pursue their own research questions related to the teaching and learning of writing. Teacher-research, an area of research distinct from traditional university research, is one of the continuing concerns of the Bay Area Writing Project (BAWP) and the Center for the Study of Writing.

One such program is the Teacher Research Project being conducted by BAWP, the original model for the National Writing Project. During the 1988–89 school year, the Teacher Research Project brought together twenty teachers who were doing research in their own classrooms so that they might have a place to meet as colleagues to discuss related research ideas and find peer support. As part of their participation in the Project, teachers developed research questions and designed their research studies during biweekly meetings held on the campus of the University of California, Berkeley. Other components of the Teacher Research Project seminars included the sharing of daily writing logs, the discussion of selected research articles, and small-group response work.

The research questions of these classroom teacher- researchers yielded a rich and wide array of studies. In June, participants prepared reports based on their work, including topics such as detracking in an advanced-placement English class, a case study of a learning-disabled elementary student, using writing in science classes, mastering math word problems through writing, and the relations between talk and writing. As shown by the work produced during the first year, BAWP's Teacher Research Project has a promising beginning in addressing three specific problems of educational practice: expanding the role and influence of the teacher, improving the teaching and uses of writing, and determining the value of teacher research.

In research related to the work being done by the teachers in the Teacher Research Project, the Center for the Study of Writing is beginning to analyze the extensive data collected from a meta-study it conducted to look closely at what happens when teachers are engaged in classroom research. In addition to conducting extensive research about writing, the Center for the Study of Writing offers a series of publications of interest to teacher-researchers. A description of a partial list of titles follows:

Research in Writing: Past, Present, and Future discusses the past twenty years of writing research, reviewing relevant research in order to posit a social-cognitive theory of writing and the teaching of learning of writing. This paper provides a constructive rationale for the research mission of the Center for the Study of Writing. (Freedman, Dyson, Flower, and Chafe).

A Good Girl Writes Like a Good Girl: Written Response and Clues to the Teaching/Learning Process presents a case study of a high-achieving student in a ninth-grade English class, exploring and analyzing sources of the student's misunderstanding of teacher-written response to her writing. The researchers uncover a complexity of strategies that lie behind the misunderstanding, reflecting the information, skills, and values that teacher and student bring to the writing process. (Sperling and Freedman).

Writing and Reading in the Classroom explores the classroom as an environment for literacy and literacy learning. The paper discusses ways in which teachers have developed strategies for encouraging children to learn to write-and-read—activities that have often been dissociated in classrooms but that together create a literacy learning environment. (Britton).

Peer Response Groups in Two Ninth-Grade Classrooms looks at peer response groups in two ninth-grade college preparatory classrooms. The analysis of the students' face-to-face interactions reveals how students approach the substance and form of their writing, self- and other-evaluation, problem-solving, and audience awareness. (Freedman).

Rethinking Remediation: Toward a Social-Cognitive Understanding of Problematic Reading and Writing presents a case study of the writing produced for a basic reading and writing class by a community college student considered "at risk." This paper reveals what writing strategies, habits, rules and assumptions characterize the writing skills of this underprepared student and suggests a pedagogy to move such students toward more conventional discourse. (Hull and Rose).

Students' Self-Analyses and Judges' Perceptions: Where Do They Agree? examines the premise that any writing assignment is a negotiation between a teacher's expectations and a student's representation of the task. Students' "self-analysis checklists" showed a strong shift in perception for students in the experimental training condition, but a tellingly low agreement with judges' perceptions of the texts. (Ackerman).

Expanding the Repertoire: An Anthology of Practical Approaches for the Teaching of Writing implies that students themselves should examine their own reading and writing processes and become more aware of cognitive and cultural implications of their choices. This set of classroom approaches, written by teachers collaborating on a reading-to-write course that grew out of this project, introduces students to ways of exploring their assumptions and alternative ways of representing aspects of the task. (McCormick, ed.).

Writing and Reading in the Community reviews recent scholarship on writing and reading outside of school—i.e., in the community, both at home and in the workplace. The researchers explore writing and reading as social practices and consider the implications of this social view of literacy outside of school for writing and reading instruction in school. (Gundlach, Farr, and Cook-Gumperz).

Construing Constructivism: Reading Research in the United States reviews research on Constructivism, which portrays the reader as building a mental representation from textual cues by organizing, selecting, and connecting content. This paper assesses the impact of constructivism on four reading-related issues in the United States: readability of texts, assessment of reading ability, instruction in reading, and conception of literacy. (Spivey).

The Quarterly, a joint publication of the National Writing Project and the Center for the Study of Writing, is devoted to issues in research and in practice surrounding the teaching and learning

of writing. *The Quarterly* is published four times per year. (Sperling, ed.).

An order form as well as a complete listing of publications is available from the Center for the Study of Writing, School of Education, University of California, Berkeley, California 94720.

CALLS FOR MANUSCRIPTS—PLANS FOR FUTURE ISSUES

The *CSSEDC Quarterly*, a publication of the Conference for Secondary School English Department Chairpersons of NCTE, seeks articles of 250–3,000 words on topics of interest to English department leaders. Informal, firsthand accounts of successful department activities are encouraged.

Recent surveys of our readers reveal these topics of interest: leadership training for the new department chair, class size/class load, support from the business community, censorship issues, problems for rural schools, reading/writing centers, and whole language curriculum. Short articles on these and other concerns are published in every issue. In addition, upcoming issues will have these themes:

May 1990 (February 1 deadline):
Teaching Research Writing: Alternatives/Innovations

October 1990 (July 1 deadline):
Supervision/Observation/Evaluation

December 1990 (September 15 deadline):
Effective Leadership

February 1991 (November 1 deadline):
Whole Language in the High School

Manuscripts may be sent on 5.25- or 3.5-inch floppy disks, with IBM compatible ASCII files or as traditional double-spaced typed copy.

NCTE ANNOUNCES RESEARCH GRANT RECIPIENTS

Four educators and two affiliate groups of the National Council of Teachers of English have been awarded research grants by the NCTE Research Foundation in the Collaboration Grants and Challenge Grants programs.

The Teacher-Research Collaboration Grants are intended to foster cooperative research conducted by prekindergarten through grade 14 classroom teachers and university researchers. The teacher-researcher and the university researcher must work as coinvestigators on the study. These grants have a limit of $5,000 and cannot be used to fund a dissertation or other degree projects.

The 1989 NCTE Teacher-Researcher Collaboration Grants have been awarded to Dorothy Taylor, Edith Baker School, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, and Katherine Davies Samway, Art, Research, and Curriculum Associates, Inc., Oakland, California; and to Rick Umpleby, Green-Taliaferro Comprehensive High School, Greensboro, Georgia, and Donna Alvermann, University of Georgia. Taylor and Samway will investigate the writing and thinking processes of non-native English-speaking students as they correspond with their teacher and a researcher about reading and writing. Umpleby and Alvermann will examine the role of discussion in peer and teacher writing conferences, particularly as it relates to the improved teaching and learning of literary works.

Challenge Grants are available to local, state, and regional affiliates of NCTE which may apply for matching funds from the Research Foundation (not more than 50 percent of the total budget for the project). Projects or activities that promote interest in teacher research and research studies developed around a local/state issue, sponsored by local, state, or regional affiliates, are eligible for Challenge Grants.

The 1989 Challenge Grants have been awarded to the Central California Council of Teachers of English, for a symposium on teacher research, and to the Newark Organization of Teachers of English, Ohio, for a research project titled "Writing Instruction in Licking County: A Survey of Current Practices, K–12."

The application deadline for next year's Collaboration Grants is February 15, 1990. Challenge Grants require a two-step application process with an earlier deadline. For more information on both of these programs, write Project Coordinator, NCTE Research Foundation, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801.

The NCTE Research Foundation was established in 1960 in honor of former NCTE executive secretary J. N. Hook.

NCTE COMMISSION ON READING ISSUES STATEMENTS OPPOSING BASAL READING SYSTEMS

Literacy levels of American youth would rise if students, from first grade on, were allowed to spend plenty of time reading good books. But to make such reading possible, the dominance of basal reading systems in American classrooms must be broken. This is the message of two statements issued by the Commission on Reading of the National Council of Teachers of English. They are titled *Report on Basal Readers* and *Basal Readers and the State of American Reading Instruction: A Call for Action.*

The commission warns that basal reading systems—usually adopted on a district or statewide basis—crowd actual reading out of the school day by mandating a time-consuming range of isolated skills activities. Most contemporary basal reading series promote and reflect outdated concepts about learning to read and assessing reading ability, the commission says. The rigid step-by-step controls they impose on teaching methods and learning activities foster the misconception that students must spend time working with small bits of controlled language before they can try to read from books.

Under such systems, the commission says, comprehension is measured by having students find "correct answers" to questions about a short text—an activity that sheds no light on whether they understand—or even read—the whole passage. Both students and teachers are reduced to going through prescribed paces without reaching for breadth of reading experience or depth of understanding.

The commission recommends a series of actions for school administrators and policymakers to take to broaden and enrich reading programs. They include changing laws that favor or mandate basal reading programs, providing incentives for local school districts to experiment with alternatives, giving teachers inservice training to broaden their repertoire of classroom approaches, and encouraging them to use alternative methods of teaching and assessment.

Single free copies of the two pamphlets are available from NCTE. Send a 25¢-stamped, self-addressed business-size envelope with your request to Membership Service Representative, NCTE, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801. Each pamphlet is available in quantities of 100 for $7.50.

Report on Basal Readers, Stock No. 41188-015. *Basal Readers and the State of American Reading Instruction: A Call for Action*, Stock No. 02360-015.

EDITORS REAPPOINTED

The Executive Committee of the National Council of Teachers of English has reappointed the editors of two NCTE journals to second terms of three years, beginning in the fall of 1991.

Ben F. Nelms, a professor of English education at the University of Missouri, Columbia, will continue to edit *English Journal*, the official publication of the Secondary Section of NCTE. Elizabeth D. Nelms will continue to serve as associate editor.

"*English Journal* will remain as a professional journal for classroom teachers, rather than a refereed research journal or a recipe book of classroom practices," Nelms commented. "We will work with the Secondary Section Steering Committee to increase attention to the needs of junior high and middle school teachers, teachers in urban areas, and teachers of alienated students. We sense a particular need to give attention to the needs of language users in a participatory democracy. Though we've arrived at this position independently, I think it echoes one of the main concerns of the Coalition of English Associations." The coalition report, *The English Coalition Conference: Democracy through Language*, was published by NCTE in March 1989.

Gordon Pradl of New York University and Mary K. Healy of the University of California will continue as coeditors of *English Education*, the quarterly journal of the Conference on English Education, NCTE's constituent group for teacher educators.

Pradl, an associate professor in the English Department, is also assistant director of the NYU Expository Writing Program. Healy is research and training director of the Puente Project, a statewide program for Mexican-American and Latino community college students in the University of California system.

On future plans for *English Education*, Pradl said, "We hope to continue to publish significant articles and essays on the preservice and inservice education of teachers of English at all levels, as well as on issues affecting literacy instruction in our society."

English Journal is published monthly, September through April. Nelms' editorial office address is 215-216 Townsend Hall, University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri 65211. *English Education* appears in October, December, February, and May. The mailing address for manuscripts is Gordon Pradl, Coeditor, *English Education*, New York University, 733 Shimkin Hall, New York, New York 10003. Subscriptions and advertising for both publications are handled at NCTE headquarters, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801.

CSSEDC ELECTION RESULTS

Winners of the CSSEDC election were announced at the 1989 CSSEDC Conference in Baltimore. Susan Benjamin, English Department Chair, Highland Park High School, Highland Park, Illinois, and Thomas Fischer, English Department Chair, Lyons Township High School, La Grange, Illinois were elected Members-at-Large. Congratulations to the winners and thanks to all other candidates.

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